CICELY;

THE ROSE OF RABY.

An Historic Novel.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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CICELY OF RABY.

WHEN I first consented, my dear friend, to your request, my compliance was the easier, as I imagined a few pages would comprise the history of my life. Convinced of my mistake, gladly would I resign the task, did not your partial friendship flatter me I amuse and entertain you; well am I convinced you take now, as you ever did, an interest in what concerns me—therefore I will proceed.

I descended from the battlements, and

entered a small chapel which was at the bottom of the tower. There prostrating myself at the foot of the cross, I poured out the anguish of my soul; I vowed, on my return to England (should that ever be allowed me) to cause propitious masses to be performed for the repose of my lover, whose untombed body perhaps lay bleaching beneath some craggy rock, and whose unquiet spirit wandered ever near me; for sir William too I prayed, and earnestly, most earnestly, deplored the danger which so threatened my devoted countrymen; I prayed too for strength of mind to bear the evils I might be doomed to suffer—and, oh! guard my heart! (exclaimed the duke)—may the weapons of the English be blunted ere they reach him!

'I left the chapel, and scarce knowing which way I went, attempted to open the door which led to the other apartment—it was fastened. I recollected

what

what the duke had said, and felt in reality a prisoner. "Is this your love, cruel Orleans?" thought I, as slowly I bent my steps to my own chamber;—here I found nothing to enliven or divert my thoughts; every thing around me proclaimed at once the love, the attention, yet the cruelty, of the prince. I took up the harp to which he had often listened with rapture, whilst I sung of woes too like my own—I sighed, and replaced it—again I drew it to me, and began chanting to its music a triumphant ballad, written by a minstrel of the North upon Ralph lord Neville's return from the battle of Durham, when the Scots were defeated, and David their king taken prisoner. Oft, on days of high festivity, had I heard the lofty walls of Brancepeth and Raby echo to the strain which now conjured up a thousand different images to torture me. My tears dropped on the strings, and my

sobs were louder than the music. Ceasing to play, I traversed the apartment—I surveyed each picture that adorned it. Ye are all laid at rest, I cried, in your tombs—would I were also! Alas! in what have I offended that I am thus punished!—But I will no longer tamely submit to this oppression; I will imitate the heroic spirit of my sister Jane, and either escape from this tyranny, or perish in the attempt.

The servant entered with my dinner; I dismissed him, and begged to see the person left in chief charge of the place; of him I inquired what commands the duke had given regarding me?

"Every domestic has orders to pay the same obedience to you," he replied, "as if the prince himself commanded; so ask you not to quit the tower allotted for your residence; your women are to sleep in the chamber adjoining yours. Such, lady, are our orders, nor dare we disobey."

disobey them. A sentinel is placed at the passage which communicates with the other parts of the castle, and at night a strong guard is planted round this tower. This, lady, I inform you of, lest supposing it in your power to elope, you should make some rash attempt, and I be obliged to put in execution the remaining orders of the duke; those are, not to allow your footsteps beyond this chamber and the next to it. Reluctantly was it the noble-hearted prince left such orders, and reluctantly would they be put in execution.

" Were you even to escape our vigilance, it would be equally impossible to reach a port of France or the English army, who are now devoted to destruction. Excuse me, lady; but I thought there appeared in your countenance an air of desperation which might induce you to attempt what it were impossible to execute. Reflect, fair lady, what raf-

fian hands, were you to quit the castle, that delicate form might shrink under; think now, when war, loose and unbridled, rages over the land—think to what you might be exposed. (I shuddered). Here you reign mistress; the duke, fearful for your safety, has taken every precaution to preserve you from your own impatience."

"Enough!" I cried, "enough!"

"Pardon me, my lady, but my zeal for my lord must be evinced by my care of you."

He bowed respectfully, and withdrew.

A thousand schemes presented themselves for my escape, and each was rejected as soon as formed. Sanguine as my hopes were ere I had seen the governor of the castle, I found, to join my father, or even to quit my prison, must be performed by little less than a miracle.

The moon arose and shed her pale light through my casement. Perhaps, thought

thought I, opening it, the spirit of the departed may again visit and inspire me with some plan for my escape; I will not be alarmed—no, I will not shrink from the interview. Beloved of my soul! I exclaimed, behold me the victim of despair! The moon appeared as on the preceding night; the owl again saluted it with her dissonant notes, and shivering with cold, I kept my station at the window; now I heard a foot, and stretching out my head, saw the soldiers who guarded me, and, sighing, withdrew;—true it is, the duke will not suffer me to escape.

Distressed and worn out by watching, I threw myself on the bed, but slept not till day had again dawned, and it was noon ere I awoke. The remainder of the day was spent in examining every corner, each cranny, of those apartments where I had liberty to range, but still no hopes of escape. When night came,

illness compelled my submission to the entreaties of my attendants—I undressed, and went to bed.

A slight fever, brought on by agitation of mind, terrified them; and unwilling to appear obstinate, I listlessly took whatever they were disposed to give me.

On the third day, being able to take the air, I was permitted to go on the top of the tower. A horn sounded at the gate; a courier was arrived from the prince, who brought orders to his people, and a letter to me, which contained protestations of unalterable love, lamentations of his fate and my cruelty, with apologies for confining me.

"The scarf," said he, "the work of my loved Cicely, is my sole comfort; a hundred times in a day do I press it to my heart; it recalls your image as I saw you when, with those eyes thrown supplicant upon mine, you conjured me to spare your father. Ah, Cicely! has the earl

earl not cause to upbraid me—your cousin too, the gallant Henry? Saw you the famished looks of your countrymen, your soul would shudder for them; a short time will decide their fate; I have joined the troops of France—the flower of the nobility is with me; I command an army of well-appointed soldiers, but—I remember my promise."

I bathed this epistle with my tears. Was it yet too late to sooth the duke, to save my friends? I returned to my apartment. Weak as I was, I should have sought an interview with him, had I not remembered the apparition. Again I gave myself up to my own thoughts, and forbade every attendance.

All was now silent; the night was thick and dark; I heard the footsteps of my guards—the wind roared round the castle, and rocked its towers—the rain pelted against my windows—my taper was wasted down in its socket. Me-

thought I heard footsteps in the adjoining chamber—be still, my throbbing heart, it was but imagination—again I listened—all was silent, so silent, I fancied I heard the vibrations of my own pulse. The clock struck one; it fell with solemn sound on my heart.

I trembled as I walked to the window; the waning crescent shone with a sickly light, the wind was hushed, the rain over, yet it hung on the ivy, and dropped trickling from leaf to leaf. The moon shone too faintly wholly to illume my apartment, but its beams fell upon a picture of Eleanor, the repudiated wife of Louis the Seventh, afterwards queen to Henry of Anjou, first of the Plantagenets who reigned in England; it was a whole length, and reached from the top to the bottom of the room.

"Ah, Henry!" I softly whispered, "how dear didst thou pay for that rich alliance! Hadst thou, instead of the vindictive

dictive heiress of Guienne, raised the fair Clifford to thy throne, what comfort mightst thou have had in dutiful sons, in a wife who would have lightened the cares of royalty! But thy children proved a curse, and she who should have soothed the anguish of a crown set it with thorns, and sharpened the swords of thy rebellious, unnatural sons. The angry queen, I fancied, frowned—now she seemed to move, and, whilst I stood with my eyes rivetted upon her, disappeared; in her stead again I beheld the apparition of my drowned lover; it spake not, but beckoned to me. . . .

"Oh, speak, speak to the wretched Cicely!" I exclaimed, in a faint voice.

"Hush!" said the phantom, "and follow."

A noise at the door made me turn my head, and fearful what new spectre might affright me, I sunk, insensible to every thing, upon a seat near. When I reco-

vered, I was surrounded by my women, one of whom being awake had heard my exclamation. I turned to where I had seen the form of my lover—"There, yes, just there, he stood—ah! why did you again, a second time, leave me? or why came you from the region of the grave to visit the lost, the miserable Cicely?"

"The angry queen—she frowns no longer; see, she smiles at my woes!"—and I looked steadily at Eleanor.

What I had said was attributed to a return of my fever, which had again unsettled my senses; undressing me, I was put to bed, and one of my attendants sat by me.

I insisted upon rising as usual in the morning, and spent that day as the preceding ones. Before night I summoned resolution to examine the picture—it remained the same, and I sometimes thought fancy alone had conjured up this illusion of my senses; yet had I not beheld

beheld him—heard his voice?—that was no illusion of fancy; perhaps to-night he will again appear, he may speak again, and I will listen to him.

I dismissed my attendants, promising to retire to sleep. Left to my own thoughts, I vainly strove to acquire some degree of composure; and with my eyes fixed upon the heiress of Guienne—"Pity," I said, "thy descendant, and calm her soul to bear this wished yet dreaded interview." I sat down to embroider—I threw by my work, and took up the song of the famous Roland; I endeavoured to read, but found to attend was impossible. Again the awful hour of midnight was proclaimed, yet nothing appeared; anxiously, fearfully, I closed my book, and steadily looked on the picture—it moved—I started from my seat—my courage fled; covering my eyes, I shook with terror—I felt the touch of some one, yet, still alarmed, dared not look up.

"Alas!

"Alas! am I then indeed so terrible?" said a voice, indelibly impressed on my ear. I took courage—"Tell me, I conjure you, what you wish?" I opened my eyes, and saw kneeling at my feet, with a look of supplication—*my lover!*—no phantom, but he himself. Rising, as he saw me turn pale, he put his arm round to support me; I felt the beating of that heart I thought had long ceased to vibrate. "Good God!" I cried, "is it possible?—do you indeed live?—what providence preserved you?—by what miracle are you here?"

"Hush, my adored lady!—let us fly, instantly fly;" and he drew my trembling arm through his. We advanced to the picture, which, I found, concealed a private door; it was fast; the wind had closed it, and on our side it was impossible to reach the lock..

The noise made by our vain endeavours awaked my women, who entering, and

and seeing a stranger, shrieked and ran out; the room was instantly filled with armed soldiers, who seizing my lover, conveyed him to a dungeon.

"Oh, take me, take me too!" I cried; "we will not be separated!"—but my lamentations were fruitless.

The governor questioned me concerning the way my lover had entered; I persevered in silence. He then told me, that by attempting to escape, he must be obliged to confine me agreeably to his instructions, and withdrew; the women staying by me till morning, when the apartment was again searched; a door was discovered in the wainscot, which had been closed up; it led by a private staircase to the chapel at the bottom of the tower, where it was supposed their prisoner had been concealed since the duke left the castle.

Conscious of my lover being alive, I thanked my God that I had not yielded

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to the duke, although there seemed no chance of liberty for either. He was, for my sake, entombed as it were alive, without a ray of hope to solace him, in one of the dungeons, of which they taught me imagination itself could not paint the horrors; the thought drove me to despair; but had he not been wonderfully preserved? had he not visited me by a miracle?—yet will I hope the same Providence who thus preserved will still protect him.

I went early to bed, fatally convinced I need not wait this night; the phantom and the real form of my lover, alas! I might never again behold!

I slept, but my dreams presented to me nothing but tormenting and desultory images; I saw my father and brothers bleeding and captives, as the dead bodies of my countrymen were spread around them; now I beheld the duke of Orleans, who threatened to waste England

land with fire and sword; my fancy now seemed to hear preparations for the execution of my lover; he even entreated me—but it was in my dream—to meet the duke's wishes, and save his life.

Now the scene changed, and I was at Raby, surrounded by my friends—married to my lover; the venerable Ambrose joined our hands; the earl and countess embraced me; no longer was Thomalin my brother's page, but heralds proclaimed a long list of titles, none of which I could distinguish; then appeared the minstrels of the house of Neville, who sung to their harps the heroic deeds of his ancestors. But this fancied enjoyment was not long allowed me, for the duke of Orleans entered the walls, mounted on his favourite steed—"Renounce," he cried, "*false traitor, the lady* Cicely; thy life shall be the sacrifice of thy presumption." So terrible were my apprehensions, that my shrieks awoke

me.

me. I was not confident in dreams, but this seemed prophetic, and struck me with terror; I wildly bade my native land, my friends, my lover, a long, long farewell; and wrapping my mantle round me, arose and went to the window.

The grey mists were slowly ascending from the river, which already glistened through the trees; the sun rose all-glorious, and shed his beams over the forest, now diversified by various shades, which marked the autumnal season. Conscious of being debarred from leaving the castle, my wish became the more ardent for the liberty of roving through those woods.

Oft thought I of the early rambles with my gentle sister Eleanor in the parks of Raby and Brancepeth—oft remembered how my young heart beat at meeting with my brother and his favourite; then indeed I knew not what was love; all was joy, all was peace, as we frolicked

frolicked over the lawn, and in childish playfulness chased the timid fawns. Ah! happy, happy days of infancy! too lightly did I prize you! dear is your remembrance to my sad heart!

As I shivered with the cool air of morning and the reflection on past times, my women entered, who informed me a courier had been dispatched to the duke, to acquaint him of Thomalin being taken.

Time passed heavily; my only amusement was to examine if it were possible to find any means to open the door through which my lover had entered. Sad and silent would I sit down, with my eyes fixed on the picture, as if I expected it would once more remove. By intense application I at length found a crevice in the wainscot; to this I applied my eager sight; it shewed me a long gloomy passage, which, from the dust and cobwebs that hung on its sides, discovered

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it was rarely used; it was, it must be, along this dreary track that my lover passed.

Wearied with wretchedness, I sat down, meditating on my strange fate. A hollow sound echoed along this gallery—it was the shutting of some distant door. Raising my eyes involuntarily, I saw thrust through the cranny of the wainscot a slip of paper; on it were written but two words—" *Be prepared.*" The writing was Thomalin's; expectation thrilled through me; but how this scroll came there, no conjecture could reach, for my lover must still be in his dungeon.

I looked through the crevice, but all was silence; I saw no one to discompose the spiders, who seemed to keep an undisturbed possession.

The paper was pressed first to my heart, and then to my lips; thus passed the whole day. Retiring to bed in the

evening,

evening, I early dismissed my women, then softly rose and dressed myself—again examined the scroll—*for what was I to be prepared?* Perhaps it was some unknown friend who thus warned me of the return of the prince, of the execution of my lover; sure I am deceived in the writing—his it could not be. Lightly I stepped to the friendly opening; all there was gloom and darkness. I knelt down, and invoked the assistance of the blessed Virgin; I felt reassured—I looked at the scroll—it is, whispered I, indeed the writing of Thomalin. Orleans! I fear thee not; this night shall deliver Cicely from thy power.

It was almost midnight, I heard a foot in the gallery, and scarcely breathed; it was but imagination; I feared my women were awake; some one spoke—it was not my lover; I listened, and found Jacqueline was talking in her dreams, for her loquacity sleep itself could not still; she ceased—

ceased—all was silence again, except at intervals the shrieking of the owl, or the periodical voices of my guards, as they paraded round the tower. Sick with expectation, I yet knew not what to expect. I opened the casement; the stars glittered in the heavens, the stillness of night was broken by sounds at a vast distance; they seemed to draw near. It was now I heard a number of horses gallopping along the road which led to Bidet; as yet they had not reached the forest. Ah! it is the impetuous prince; oft, oft have I heard the night disturbed with his furious pace; perhaps he has given battle to the English, and is bringing hither his prisoners—*Is this what I am to be prepared for?*

I turned from the window; the picture again moved—again my lover entered; snatching hastily the taper which burnt on the table, he drew me to him; we passed through the door without uttering

tering a word—it closed behind us; in silence we lightly tripped along the gloomy gallery, then crossing a number of dismal apartments, descended a narrow staircase, at the foot of which the taper went out; then passed, sinking with fear, along a narrow winding passage, and at last found ourselves in an open court; this we crossed, and entered a building on the opposite side; a faint light shone through the windows, which shewed me we were in the dormitory of the dead; the hollow pavement echoed to our steps, and the sculptured tombs, as I passed, filled me with horror. We stopped at a large statue of white marble, and entering by a trap-door in the side of the pedestal, descended a few steps; then again ascending, passed along another gallery; this terminating, Thomalin opened a door that discovered to me a large vaulted hall, at the upper end of which curtains of black velvet, richly

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ornamented, were drawn back, and disclosed a magnificent crucifix; on one side stood an urn of the purest marble, on the other the gilt armour of some royal knight; large votive candles of wax burned in candlesticks of gold, and illuminated the apartment.

The escape, the passage, the temple—all seemed the work of magic. At his devotions, with his looks bent on the cross, knelt a person clad in the coarse garb of a hermit. Hitherto I had not spoken; but persuaded of seeing before me sir William Fitzhugh, I exclaimed—"Turn, father Ambrose, and behold once more your lost Cicely, the child of your friend, the daughter of your compassion."

With an air of dignity his dress could not conceal, he arose; but it was not father Ambrose, and I grasped the arm of Thomalin.

"Fear not," he cried, "my love.—

This,

This, my lord," presenting me to the noble personage, "is the lady—this is her for whom lady St. Aubin is so deeply interested—Cicely Neville, daughter of the earl of Westmoreland, descended from the kings of England; this is her for whom your son would give up his ancestry, his country, and himself."

I started almost from the arms of him I had knelt to—"The duke of Orleans's father! Has he a father then? He is long since dead, thou spectred likeness of the noble duke!"

"Fear not him, lady," said my lover, "who is, as it were, sent from the dead to protect you."

The venerable figure then addressed me—"I have heard your eventful tale; here you are safe. Oh lady! your beauty warms even me; I wonder not the youthful bosom of Orleans beat with such fervency—I wonder not at the spirit, the resolution, of your deliverer; yet I re-

I remember the days of my youth; oh, may the penitence, the deep contrition I now feel, atone for my crimes!"

I was lost in conjecture; the recluse seemed scarce past the meridian of life; his air was noble; there was a certain gallantry in his manner; his countenance was insinuating, nor could his dress disguise the elegant proportion of his figure; his features were uncommonly handsome, the exact model of the duke of Orleans, and Thomalin had said he was his father. How could all this be? The duke had been murdered at the instigation of the duke of Burgundy, and Valentina, his duchess, had wept in vain over his untimely ashes.

"You will have much, no doubt," continued this interesting figure, "to relate to each other—I will retire to my devotions."

The velvet curtain now concealed from our view the cross and him who again

again knelt before it; and whose appearance had so bewildered my thoughts.

Almost without breathing, I inquired of my lover by what means he had escaped the storm? what miracle had brought him to Bidet? how he had been delivered from the dungeon? with a long list of questions that at once awakened curiosity, and alarmed my feelings. He immediately informed me, that in despite of the perils which surrounded him, still did his thoughts revert to me, and rendered him less able to sustain danger; the boat was overset; sir William and Gilbert being able to swim, they supported themselves amidst the waves till they found means to get upon the boat, which appeared with the bottom uppermost. Wet and benumbed with cold, and famishing with hunger, he and Gilbert gave themselves up to despair; whilst sir William, bidding them put their trust in Providence, endeavoured

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to comfort them; a sail appeared in sight; his presence of mind saved them; taking his girdle, he waved it as a signal; the ship veered, and took them up; they gave them to eat, and their weary, exhausted bodies were refreshed by sleep. In the morning the captain of the vessel visited them; sir William alone understood him, as he spoke in the Spanish tongue. A large sum of money was offered by the good father, would the captain land them on the English coast; but he informed them he had on board a person who carried dispatches from some people of distinction in England to the king of Castile, and it was not in his power, as he was bound to land him at Seville with all speed. Sir William begged he might be admitted to the presence of the noble Castilian, but was told he could not see him, as he was ill and unable to quit his bed.

"The wind now blew us on the coast of

of France. I was sent ashore, as an interpreter, with some of the Spanish sailors, to purchase provisions. Loitering to view the town, the tide flowed, and the boat, with its crew, regarding not whom they left, returned to the ship. I ran to the beach; the wind had changed, and the sails swelling to the breeze, bore the Spaniards from the shore. I raved at my misfortune; a crowd assembled, who, finding I was English, conveyed me to prison, sick with confinement, and labouring under distress of various kinds. The charity of a noted surgeon led him to visit me; by his care I recovered, yet still languished for liberty; it came at length through the means of the same person, whose fame reaching lady St. Aubin, she sent for him to cure the baron of his wounds. To her did my charitable friend relate my story; it struck her I might be one of those she had heard you so often inquire for and lament.

ment. After the baron's cure, the surgeon had returned to his place of residence, charged by the baroness to procure my liberty, which he speedily effected. No sooner was I released than I went to the castle of St. Aubin, where I threw myself at the feet of the amiable baroness, and poured out my grateful thanks."

"And were you indeed," interrupting him, "in the castle of St. Aubin, beneath the very roof which sheltered your Cicely?"

"Yes; yet that you were there no longer, that you were in the power of the gay duke of Orleans, gave additional pangs to my heart. The baron had been released as soon as the earl your father was informed of your being at the castle of St. Aubin, but you were removed from his protection ere he returned.

"With the baron and his lady I quickly became a great favourite—the little Isabella

Isabella too, who oft lisped mournfully your loss.

'I see you are deeply interested in the fate of the lovely Cicely,' said lady St. Aubin, 'and have entreated the dauphin for her release; but the duke of Orleans is too powerful; he dare not offend him, and vain are our expostulations; he threatened the dauphin to withdraw his troops, should he persist even in wishes for the release of his prisoner. We must use artifice; could we but discover where she is imprisoned, I am convinced it will not be difficulty nor danger that will deter you from at least endeavouring her rescue.'

"Very soon after, the baroness by some means learnt the probability of your being confined at the castle of Bidet; she had sent a trusty messenger, and expected his return the same night. Early in the morning of the following day the charming baroness sent for me—

'My conjectures are,' she cried, 'right; Cicely is indeed at Bidet; do you undertake her deliverance; though dangerous, it is not impracticable.'

"I fell at her feet, and thanking her, with many rapturous expressions of gratitude, swore no danger should affright me.

'Rise,' said this amiable woman, 'be calm, and listen to me.' Then pulling out a small gold crucifix, she solemnly proceeded—'On this do I require you most devoutly to swear never to reveal, whilst the duke of Orleans lives, what I shall unfold, strange and unnatural as the circumstance may be.'

"Kissing the blessed cross, I bowed in devout acquiescence; then tying it round my neck—'You must, ere you impart this tale to lady Cicely, exact from her the same holy assurance.' The cross was unfolded, the oath was taken, Thomalin proceeded—'My mother,' said

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the baroness, 'was the daughter of a nobleman of Bretagne, most unfortunate in his children; his other daughter followed an Englishman of the name of Fitzhugh to his native country, nor was it ever known what fate attended her.'

"I remembered the sad tale of the fair Beatrice; I would have suppressed what I knew, but my looks betrayed me; and I was obliged to relate the story, softening it as much as possible. The tender heart of the amiable baroness sympathized in the miseries caused by the fatal passion of the unfortunate Beatrice.

'My mother,' continued the baroness, 'though less guilty, was equally unfortunate. The fame of her beauty filled every province in France. Louis duke of Orleans took a journey purposely to Bretagne, that he might see her. Fame, he found, had not magnified her charms. He who was at once the idol and slave of the sex felt for the fair Adeline a

passion at the same time tender and violent. He declared his love oft in secret, and visited the beauteous enslaver of his heart. Already engaged by her father to a distant relation, heir to the count's titles and estates, she durst not give open encouragement to his addresses. A more exact contrast could not be found to the prince, who, gallant and generous, was the reverse of the narrow-souled husband her destiny seemed to ordain her. The duke taught her to spurn at chains which fetter the free-born heart, but cannot control the affections. She was commanded to marry the person allotted by her father, or go the next day to a convent. The prince appeared. So tempted, so situated, who can say they would not have done so?

"Adeline left, never more to behold it, the stately mansion of her father; but she left it not till privately married to the duke; a priest dependent on him, and

and her own damsel, alone were present. She accompanied her husband to a hunting-seat near Orleans, who from time to time delayed, under various pretences, acknowledging her as his wife, or presenting her to the world as duchess of Orleans; yet was she happy, confident of his love, doubting not his honour, till, in despite of his precaution, report reached her that a match was in agitation between him and Valentina of Milan, a lady beautiful and accomplished. She became a mother; the joyful news was sent to the duke; he came not—the husband came not to console his wife, nor clasp his child. No longer was she left in ignorance of her misery; this cruel father of her helpless infant—her husband—in defiance of every law of justice, of love, espoused the princess Valentina.

"A delirium seized my unhappy mother, during which she repeatedly at-

tempted to end her days; and her senses returning, she found herself a prisoner in an antique castle.

"For many a weary month the duke did not appear; at length, with tears, he supplicated her pardon, artfully insinuating it was out of his power to avoid a detested form of marriage. He pleaded his brother and his uncle's command; she was in reality his wife, and he would ever treat her with the tenderness of a husband—that his love was still unchanged—and offered to settle on her, as Adeline of Bretagne, the castle and adjoining lands. Enraged at an offer so humiliating, stung with the base deceit, she rejected with disdain his proposals, threatened to throw herself at the foot of the throne, and declare her wrongs.

'Know you not, Adeline, you are my prisoner? know you not the power I have will make your story disbelieved, and shame will be heaped upon you? To

To Bretagne you could not return.—Where would you be sheltered in France? where are the proofs—the evidence of a marriage performed by a priest at my devotion, and whose only witness is dead? Reflect, and be contented with a lot thousands would envy.'

"'The duke staid several days, Adeline steadily refusing to see him, till threatening to take her child, the mother melted. She now entreated he would visit her; I was in her arms when he entered. 'Behold, my lord,' cried my mother, 'your child, the child of your once-loved Adeline, your wedded wife; only allow me to keep this darling, the sad memento of my imprudence; I will retire to some convent—there shall my name never salute your ear—never shall it be said this is the duchess of Orleans—never shall it be said the blood of Valois flows in the veins of this deserted babe.'

"My father relented not. 'No,' said he;

he; 'here do you stay; again I will visit you, and expect then to be received, not with tears and reproaches, but with smiles.'

"When the duke left Bidet, he took not me, but he left my mother so guarded, it was impossible to escape. His visits to Bidet were frequent; yet, though ardently pleading for a return to the passion he still avowed, Adeline would not hear him on any other terms than his declaring her openly his wife.

"The whole time of this beloved parent was spent in my education; my father appeared charmed with me; each journey to Bidet seemed to increase his partiality. It was agreed, if I might be allowed to remain and receive from my mother instructions she was so well qualified to give, she would not reveal her story; on this condition we had liberty to go wherever we chose for air and exercise. The visits of the duke to Bidet grew

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less frequent, and months and years oft rolled away without his presence. After one of those long absences he again came to the castle. 'Adeline,' said he one day to me, 'I have been informing your mother that I wish to have you married, and have fixed on the baron St. Aubin; I will bring him to Bidet; you cannot fail to please him; he holds large possessions by knight's service under me, and is young, handsome, and accomplished.'

"I trembled, and alternately felt my face suffused with red and white. I threw my arms round my mother—'Never, never will I leave you,' I cried; then kneeling to the duke, I entreated he would allow me to stay at Bidet.

"'Silly child,' he replied, 'you know not what you ask; should I die, who would protect you? I give you a protector, and will settle on you a revenue suitable to a daughter of the house of Orleans.'

'Leave

'Leave us, my lord, I beseech you,' said my mother. No sooner was the duke gone than, throwing her arms about me, she kissed off the tears that trickled down my face. 'Hear me, my child; irritate not the duke by refusing; think, my love, what evils might assail, were I to leave you; my days wear to an end, consumed by grief and shame; it will not be long perhaps you have a mother; were you united to a worthy man, I should die in peace.'

"Overcome by this address, I surveyed the duchess, whose faded looks too plainly told me she had indeed not long to stay on earth, but, constantly with her, I had not perceived the sad change.

'Oh my mother!' weeping, I cried, 'how have I been blinded! you are ill; you will leave, too sure, the wretched Adeline to weep for your loss.'

'Talk not thus,' replied this beloved parent; 'but promise, if St. Aubin is

not

not disagreeable to you, that you will consent to the wishes of your father.'

'I promise any thing—every thing you require; do but endeavour to live—to bless your Adeline.'

"St. Aubin was introduced; we were mutually pleased with each other, and the duke, giving him my hand, bestowed on me a princely fortune.

"I entreated the baron to suffer me to attend my mother, who was, soon after my marriage, entirely confined to her apartment; yet, secluded as we were from the world, even at the solitary castle of Bidet did the report of the duke's amour with the queen reach our ears.

'Alas!' said the duchess, 'into what distress may this intrigue precipitate your father! He may be glad of a retreat from the malice of his enemies; such a retreat does this place afford, though unknown to him; while I have strength, let me shew it you. The woman

man who attended me, when first I came to Bidet, revealed it, overcome by acts of kindness I had shewn her during a long fit of sickness; but for this, with her would the secret have died. She learnt it from her father, who, in the reign of king John, had attended there a prisoner of consequence, for whom the concealed apartments were originally formed.'

"My mother did not long survive the disclosure. I attended her in her last moments; how calm was the resignation of this amiable woman! The duke came to Bidet; he shewed, too late, a contrition for his crimes, and erected in the chapel of the castle a stately monument to her memory. Her heart, enshrined in a gold box, enclosed in a marble urn, was deposited on her monument; her body, agreeably to her request, being sent to Bretagne to be interred with her parents, who did not long survive

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the elopement of the unfortunate Beatrice.

"I divulged to the duke—such were my mother's commands—the secret of the retreat, and accompanied my husband to his castle.

"Upon a visit to the duke in Paris, at the time of his assassination, I saw Isabella; she was beautiful, artful, and intriguing. Alas, my noble father! why did you suffer yourself to be enthralled? Two virtuous, lovely, and accomplished women, to whom you were bound by the holy rites of marriage, wanted power to make you faithful; dear did you pay for that infamous alliance which scandal at least proclaimed you to have formed! Returning from a visit to this queen, he was assaulted by murderers; one hand was lopped off, and he was brought home to his palace as dead. The duchess was in a state of distraction; the surgeon of the household informed me he thought

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the duke yet breathed; his confessor, an old and faithful domestic, with me, were all that were near the body. 'Let us,' said I, 'endeavour to stop the bleeding; yet may there be hopes.' The surgeon, examining his wounds, declared, though numerous, he thought them not mortal.

"The duchess was not sensible to any thing, and we resolved to keep the knowledge of his yet being alive entirely concealed. In a few hours he was recovered so far as to recollect his assassination. 'My enemies,' said he, 'will not rest till I am laid in my grave; they swore long since my final destruction; open my wounds in mercy, and let me bleed to death.'—We conjured him to be still, and some medicines being given, he was lulled to sleep.

'Adeline,' said he, awaking, 'I have seen the injured spirit of your mother; she warned me to atone by prayer and penitence for my crimes; she pointed

me

me to retire to the castle of Bidet; 'there will you be safe from the malice of your enemies, who will never cease to persecute you.' I will obey (if I am permitted to live) her injunctions; Heaven will perhaps be graciously pleased to allow me leisure to repent, nor shall I be sent, with all misdeeds unrepented of, before an Almighty Judge. Was I to return into the world, I must be exposed to the vengeance of my enemies, to the indignation of the artful, the furious queen, whom here I solemnly vow never again to see. Let a funeral, splendid as my rank demands, be made for me; I need not say, conceal my life even from the duchess.'

"Pretending sickness, I kept my apartment, into which the duke was removed, whilst the reality of his death was never disputed. He recovered so as to venture to undertake the journey, accompanied by the surgeon, his confes-

sor,

sor, and Jaques, the domestic of whom I spoke. He set forward in the dead of night. The morning after I took leave of the duchess, who, now recovered in a great measure from her indisposition, declared her resolution of punishing the murderers of her lord; but vain were all her threats—too powerful were the aggressors. Fatally has this deed of darkness divided France with faction, and the houses of Burgundy and Orleans still teem with mutual fury.

"The next evening I overtook my father, and by slow journeys we reached the banks of the Loire. The urn in which was deposited the heart of the unfortunate Adeline was conveyed into the retreat. Jaques was left, and is still, with his master, with whom also remained the surgeon till his death, which happened soon after.

"At parting with the duke, drawing a ring off his finger, he put it on mine, saying,

saying, let my request be what it would, if accompanied by that jewel, it should be granted, for he owed all to me."

Hitherto astonishment had fettered my tongue. Breaking silence, I cried—"Does then the duke of Orleans, so long supposed dead, inhabit here?"

"It is himself,' rejoined my lover; "but listen to my recital.

'Here,' said the charming baroness, drawing from her finger the ring, 'this I entrust to your care; you shall bear the first request I make to my father. Disguised as a pilgrim, you may in safety reach the castle of Bidet, which is surrounded by a forest of some miles in circumference, near the entrance of which is a small monastery of Carthusian monks, founded by the duke, and of which the person I mentioned as his confessor is superior; such indeed were the conditions of the endowment. Produce to him this ring; he will, upon reading my letter,

letter, shew you the way which leads to the retirement of my father; the remainder I leave to your discretion, on which every thing depends.'

"Impatiently I crossed the province of Normandy, the county of Maine, and entered the forest of Bidet. I reached the convent, and demanding an audience of the superior, delivered my letter, and shewed my ring.

'Rest here till night,' said he.

"Sallying out by a private door when dark, after a short walk we came to the mouth of a cave, when, pulling from his girdle a key, we entered it.

'Here,' said he, 'is the supposed residence of a hermit, for from hence issues, in a hermit's dress, the duke's only attendant, bringing from the convent the necessary provision for their support.'

"An altar concealed a door at the back of the cave, which the superior unlocked.

locked. After having struck a light, we entered a subterraneous passage, which terminated in this apartment. Jaques went to search for his master, who was gone to take his usual walk in the wood, and the good monk bade me adieu, obliged to return before the midnight prayers. Thus left in this large and solitary apartment, I began to reflect that perhaps a few paces only might separate me from her for whom I encountered every danger; perhaps the duke may—but away with fear!—death would be triumph in her cause!

"I began to examine the apartment. The curtain concealed, as it does now, the apparatus of woe; I undrew it, and beheld the marble urn which contained the heart of the unfortunate Adeline, the gilt armour of her husband, and the breastplate which he had worn when assassinated, stained with blood. Thus did he seem to dedicate to penitence what-

ever could remind him of his guilt and his miraculous escape.

'Ah!' said I, 'still does he bewail the mother of lady St. Aubin; he will not refuse her first request.'

"The duke entered—I felt awed—I knelt, and presented the testimony of my message. Gracefully raising me, he took it and pressed it to his lips.

'Rise,' said he, 'youth! whatever may be the request you bring, already is it granted.'

"In as few words as possible did I explain to the duke your adventures, with the gratitude of the baroness to the earl of Westmoreland, and her affection for you. Bitterly did the duke sigh when informed of your detention by his son. 'Alas,' said he, 'unhappy youth! rash wert thou ever in thy pursuits; yet how shall I condemn—I, the seducer of so many?' He paused, then recovering himself—'Let us,' he continued, 'proceed

ceed with caution; first it is necessary we should know whether the lady Cicely wishes to quit Bidet; Orleans may have so far seduced her affections, she may no longer wish to leave him, and we must know which are her apartments; all this requires time and certainty.'

"In his hermit's dress, Jaques, visiting the castle, learnt it was the tower next the river that you inhabited.

"Resolving to warn you of my intentions, at midnight I was beneath your window, which, by means of a long pole, I hoped to reach, and fix a slip of paper with my name. Your casement opened—I heard you speak—I heard you—Oh! yes, I heard you pathetically invoke my spirit. No longer master of myself—forgetting the probability of my sudden appearance alarming you, I called upon your name—I heard you fall; almost frantic, I saw your apartment blazing with lights—all seemed confu-

 sion;

sion; and I should have loitered where I could have seen the window, till morning had revealed me to the enraged prince, had not Jaques found and forced me back to his master.

"The next day Jaques learnt the departure of the duke, and that you were strictly confined. To free you now, except by force, was impossible; alas! what force had I to oppose!

'Trust in Providence,' said my noble host; 'here you are safe.'

"Anxiously, painfully, passed three days; on the evening of the fourth we were visited by the good monk, who had been prevented from waiting on his worthy patron by urgent and melancholy circumstances.

'Fear no longer,' said he, 'for lady Cicely; I recollect there was a passage to those apartments where she is confined, which I dare say still remains. You, my lord, remember I was left an orphan

at

at three years old, and brought up by the charity of queen Joan, your mother, in this castle, every corner of which I then, as a child, thoroughly explored. Playing one day in a gallery that led to a suite of rooms even then disused, I saw somewhat on the wainscot which attracted my attention; examining it, I hit upon a spring that gave way, and fell into a large apartment; I called for help—no one came. Recovering my fright, and supposing myself in possession of a secret, I resolved not to disclose it, for there I could hide trifles which might otherwise be taken from me. This must be the room occupied by the lady, nor do I think any creature but myself knows of this entrance; by it you may safely, but cautiously, visit the fair captive.'

"Led by the monk, I reached the door—he quitted me—I entered—terrified

fied, you screamed—your women appeared—ere they saw me, I retreated.

"The following night I came; a crevice in the wainscot shewed you to me reading. You know what followed—know I was put into the most dismal dungeon of the castle. On the second night, between which and day I could scarce perceive the change, I laid me down on the straw given me as a bed, but was roused by the harsh creaking of my prison-door. How cheering was the taper which shewed the friendly countenance of Jaques, instead of an executioner, which my fears anticipated! I followed him to duke Louis, who informed me he had not learnt my fate till that evening, although he dreaded it was worse than death. 'A master-key of all the dungeons of the castle is still,' he said, 'in my possession—therefore fear not; to-morrow night, I hope, lady Cicely may be free.' Writing the scroll

which

which Jaques thrust through the wainscot, I returned to my prison; at night again Jaques released me. Need I add more?—again you are at liberty."

"That I am so," exclaimed I, "is owing to you. Ah! who but you would have encountered such danger for the wretched Cicely? Let our fates never again be separated; ere we quit the forest of Bidet, the holy monk will unite us—nor despise the hand thus offered."

He knelt, and kissing the proffered hand, cried—"Ungrateful villain that I was, ever to declare I loved, or presumed to lift my thoughts to the lovely daughter of my benefactor! No, lady Cicely, were you in England, no more would these eyes be blessed by beholding you. Never, never shall it be said I basely betrayed; never shall the house of Neville execrate the charity which sustained a viper in their bosoms. Forget, despise, hate me—this, this I could bear; but I

 cannot

cannot—oh! I cannot see you look kindly—I cannot bear those accents, and retain my senses. What a storm, what a conflict, is raised in my heart! Though I ask not your love, yet pity my sufferings; sure that would not be denied by lady Westmoreland herself!"

"Can I," rejoined I, "forget what you have suffered for me?—despise him whose courage has saved me?—return an affection which would have led you to sacrifice life itself with hatred? Oh, no! for you I have spurned the splendid offer of the powerful prince of Orleans—yes, for you I refused to succour my father, my king, my country—no, 'tis you despise the miserable Cicely."

The duke entered, and begged I would try to take some rest in the room provided for me. At the hour of noon I joined him and my lover.

"My son," said he, "is returned; his rage at your escape is unbounded; he

he has vowed vengeance against your guards."

"It was then indeed the prince whose horses last night I heard—how fortunate was my escape!"

At night came the superior of the convent—"Quickly," said he, "bid adieu to the duke; every part of the monastery has been searched; I have informed the impetuous prince he must have passed you on the way to Rouen. Every port is to be searched, every vessel stopped. Haste; I will provide you a guide; horses ready saddled wait at the edge of the forest for your escape. Behold these dresses—effectually will they disguise you. The guide will procure horses for you at the different monasteries you pass, and shape your course to the English in Picardy; it is the only chance of escape left you."

We took a hasty leave of our noble and generous friends, and, after encoun-

tering numberless difficulties, reached the English army. Surprise was never more visible than on the face of my father as he embraced me.

Certain, if alive, I was in France (for the generous Seton had returned to England to inform him), immediately the earl left the charge of the Scottish borders to the lords Dacre and Mauly, who had been appointed his assistants when that important charge was assigned him, and hastened to France, where the king already was with the troops. Kindly did Henry receive him, and substituted, at his desire, his eldest son, lord John Neville, as warden of the western marches.

In vain had been all inquiries after me; nor, when the castle of St. Aubin was so near being taken, did my father know it held his long-lost child.

I was introduced to the king, whom I never had seen. I shrunk from his ardent

ardent gaze, yet viewed him with looks of esteem and admiration. Beloved by his officers—almost worshipped by the soldiers—spending hours in recruiting their spirits, and disposing of his little army to the best advantage—oft have I seen the tear of pity moisten his eye, oft heard the self-condemning sigh, whilst he surveyed the war-worn host doomed to oppose the numerous army of France, which lay at a little distance, commanded by the duke of Orleans. I was terrified lest, hearing of my being in camp, he might send proposals to the earl for my hand. At the village of Maisoncelle did I first learn that already was the duke married; but, surrounded by dangers, I scarce found leisure to reflect on this proof of his duplicity, who, finding I knew it not, hoped to bend me to his views by offering what he could not fulfil. How degraded in my mind was

the prince by this attempt to deceive me!

The king gave, as a reward to my deliverer, a command in the army.

The evening before the battle, I was meditating on the probable issue of the following day, when the king entered.

"Why," said he, "my fair cousin, do you weep? know you not the fate of kings and kingdoms is in the hands of Providence? True, the French many times double our numbers, but, too secure of victory, they forget the fields of Cressy and of Poictiers. Our countrymen fight for life—it is with us victory or death. Fear not then, my sweet coz, the duke of Orleans."

"Where you are, good my liege, I cannot fear him."

I looked up to him—the fire of his eyes was gone—an expression of tenderness alone remained in his fine features, and

and that noble countenance spoke, more forcibly than words, the interest he took in my welfare.

"You love not then," said he, "Cicely, the princely duke? Should to-morrow's sun set on my banners as a conqueror, I will tell you how dear you are to the heart of Harry of Monmouth; but this is no season for love or peaceful dalliance. Adieu—perhaps for ever! but, oh fair saint! remember in thy orisons him who must to-morrow fight for his crown—for fame—for liberty—for Cicely."

Need I relate the famous battle of Agincourt, sung and recorded by so many bards? or tell of Henry's prowess, with whose name French nurses still hush their children? Nature revolts at the carnage of the day; yet here was glory for England. Not so the battle of St. Albans—the fatal fields of Wakefield and Towton, when brother raised his

his arm against brother, and children against their parents. Oh, that was misery indeed! What madness rises above the wildness of civil broils!

My lover justified the charge reposed in him, and seemed only to yield in valour to the king himself, whose life he was the happy means of preserving. Inflamed with martial ardour, Harry was separated from his troops, and surrounded by enemies; a javelin was aimed at his heart—the new officer rushed forward and warded the stroke. His sovereign rescued, he turned to where the white plumes of the duke of Orleans seemed to brave his vengeance.

"The wrongs," said he, "of lady Cicely Neville sit on my sword; yield thee, false prince—disgrace to that noble house from whence you sprung."

"I despise," said the haughty duke, "low-born youth, thee and thy ill-timed threats" (the armour of my lover display-

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ed no noble, no knightly ensigns), and turned in disdain his steed from a combat he deemed beneath him; yet was he pursued by the youth he despised, and to his valour was it owing the duke of Orleans became a prisoner.

The generous king conferred on the gallant preserver of his life the honour of knighthood, who afterwards searched the field for the body of baron St. Aubin. Covered with wounds was he found amidst heaps of slain. By the care he was taken of, we endeavoured to shew our gratitude to him and his most amiable lady.

A few days after this wonderful victory, the king said to me—"Does, my gentle cousin, that young and tender heart of thine feel sufficiently interested for thy sovereign to share with, or rather to soften for him, the cares of royalty?"

I trembled; for, occupied by my fears and the horrid scene before my sight, I thought

thought no more of what the gallant Harry hinted before the battle.

"Why," he cried, "this agitation? Young as you are, unless indeed the duke of Orleans is my rival, you surely cannot have given away that heart?"

I blushed.

"Is it so then?—speak; I will not owe your hand to compulsion, for know I mean to ask it of the earl. Descended from royal and noble blood, Harry of England will give his people a queen born in their country—he wishes no foreign princess."

I took courage, fell at his feet, and wrapped my face in my garment.

"Ah, my liege!"—bursting into tears, I could say no more.

Raising me—"I see," said he, "you shrink from saying you refuse me; tell me then your wishes. Does your father know your choice—is it deserving you?"

"Pardon, oh pardon, my gracious lord,

lord, the lost, the undone, the wretched Cicely! Would she had never seen the light! Say, if possible, you forgive me."

"The heart," returned the generous prince, "is free; but speak—where are your affections engaged?"

"This heart, my liege, was not framed for ingratitude; unthinking of love, I knew it not till, torn from the peaceful shades of Raby, I, in return for life, gave away my heart—gave it to my brother's page—to this can my father consent?—ah! no."

The king arose, walked across the tent, and again seating himself by me—"Then this," said he, "is what induced you so steadily to deny the duke, when you thought he was free to choose—this is what forces you to refuse me?"

Again would I have thrown myself at his feet; but preventing me, he said—"I have sworn to promote your union."

"Oh my gracious liege! the earl of West-

Westmoreland will never consent that an herdsman's son, born at the foot of Cheviot, should marry his daughter."

"Birth," said the king, "my coz, is but accidental; he is handsome, brave, and accomplished—has he not dared for you all dangers? I will at once evince my gratitude for saving my life, and shew you my love was above selfish views; it wishes but for your happiness; I will heap honours on him that shall conceal his birth."

"Ah, my lord! in the castle of Bidet he refused my offered hand, solemnly declaring, was I safe in England, he would take an eternal farewell of me. Had I not overheard his declaration to the hermit, never should I have known he loved."

"This," resumed the king, "interests me more warmly in his favour; it speaks the soul of nobility louder than all the sounds of pageant pride and grandeur."

Mindful

Mindful of his promise, the generous Henry took particular notice of his new knight, declaring his intention of creating him, in memory of saving his life, lord D'Agincourt, annexing to the title lands of value.

The army had reached Calais—again the dear white cliffs of England appeared; all was bustle for the embarkation, which was to take place the following day. I was seated, pensive and alone, when my lover entered.

"I come," said he, with a dejected air, "lady Cicely, to bid you adieu—I feel it must be an eternal one. Forget, my adored lady, such a being existed."

The blood forsook my cheeks, rushing in unusual tides round my palpitating heart. Scarcely could my tongue, in a faint accent, say—"Do you mean to quit me for ever? do you no longer then love the wretched Cicely?—you who, in the cave of the venerable Ambrose, swore

to

to love her for ever? Whilst this beating heart retains its motion, whilst memory retains her seat, I cannot forget him who risked his life to preserve mine—alas! to what purpose, if thus parted from him!"

I burst into tears. He soothed my throbbing heart with expressions of love—of everlasting friendship; and informed me that sir William Fitzhugh had safely landed in Spain, from whence he immediately sent dispatches by a trusty messenger to the port where I had been left, which came into lady St. Aubin's hand, who kindly directed the courier to Calais, and the ship lay with unfurled sails prepared to receive him.

"Already," said he, "have I taken leave of the gallant Henry, our gracious king; he bids me hope much. 'When,' said he, 'you return, I fear not to procure you the consent of her noble parents, and give what kings might envy you—the beautiful Cicely.'

"Alas!

" Alas! why did the munificent prince wish to inspire me with vain hopes?—I have bid farewell to my beloved benefactor, the earl of Westmoreland, who, drawing from his finger a ring, put it on mine—' Commend me,' he said, ' to my friend sir William Fitzhugh; tell him again shall he not immure himself in that dreary cave; I trust, ere long, to embrace him in the halls of Raby—his vows may have a dispensation. At Raby too I hope to see you, whom he tells me he has adopted as a son; then will I own, and endeavour to reward, the preserver of my child.' Ah! how every word smote my heart! it seemed to reproach me as the base seducer of a darling child, the child of my master."

The door opened, and lady St. Aubin flew into my arms. She loaded my lover with thanks for the care he had taken of the baron, whom she had followed to the village where we had left him

him after the battle, when hearing the English were to embark at Calais, she set out with wonderful expedition, and travelled thither to bid us adieu, wishing, if allowed, to see the duke of Orleans ere he went to England a prisoner. We explained to this amiable and sincere friend our hopeless situation; love stripped from me the light veil of hypocrisy; my exclamations were those of the heart.

"Should my father wish to bestow me in marriage, ah! shall I, refusing, say I love? I can only love him who was (degrading idea!) page to my brother. Will not the earl insist on my obeying his commands? will not the countess spurn at an alliance she will deem beneath me? If now we are separated, never again shall I behold him for whom alone I would live."

Thomalin sighed, but spoke not.

The baroness left us without a word,

but

but quickly returned, bringing with her a priest who had attended her from the castle of St. Aubin.

"Behold!" said she, "by bestowing your hand on your preserver, you shall escape the persecution you dread. To the king I will represent your fears, your hopes, your marriage; his powerful mediation will secure you a favourable reception on your return; and though the earl and countess would doubtless refuse their consent to your union, yet, when no longer in their power to prevent it, gladly will they acknowledge him who, for life preserved, deserves the love even of Cicely Neville, beautiful, noble as she is. Sir William too—he will intercede for his adopted son."

So saying, she gave my hand to my lover, who, kneeling in silence, wept as he received it. I trembled—lady St. Aubin soothed us, and the holy father pronounced his blessing.

Behold

Behold me, Matilda, married—but married without a parent's benediction.

Amidst the bustle which prevailed, I found no difficulty in accompanying my lover on shipboard without being missed; scarce had I time to reflect. A fair wind cleared us of the harbour of Calais, and quickly we reached the Spanish shore. We were conducted to sir William, who, tenderly embracing his adopted child, thanked Heaven, who had prolonged his days again to behold him.

"Lady Cicely, how is it I see you also here?"

The question long remained unanswered, till, falling on my knees, I cried, with an agitated tone—"Receive also the wife of your adopted child, who, kneeling, entreats that blessing from sir William Fitzhugh she dared not ask from the earl of Westmoreland."

Sir William shuddered, and turning round, wiped off a tear. The hand that raised

raised me trembled with the voice that soothed me with a blessing—" May it," he said, avert from you——!" He stopped; I but too well understood he would have said, a curse similar to that pronounced on donna Theresa by the rash count D'Aranjeus. To turn the subject, he began to inform us of what had passed since their parting.

" When the boat returned without you, I offered the same sum to the captain to put back as before to land us in England. The wind would not allow it, and we fast approached the coast of Spain. Meanwhile the person who bore the dispatches to the king of Castile recovered, and was able to leave his cabin; I found he was well known to me when in Spain; to him I announced myself, and inquired after my friend don Juan.

' Ah!' he cried, ' how wonderful are the decrees of Providence! In vain have I sought you in England, whither on

your account I went from don Juan. Feeling his strength decay, he petitioned the king to send and inquire after you, fearful the heir of his estates might perhaps appropriate to his own use the large fortune of the count D'Aranjeus.'

"We made the port of Seville; don Leon insisted upon my accompanying him, as also Gilbert, the Scottish chief, to a house of his in the neighbourhood, where, recovering our fatigue, we might proceed to visit don Juan.

'How painful,' said I, 'will be the meeting! When last I parted from him in Spain, then my child, my beloved Theresa, lived. Ah! little did I think then of miseries so shortly to follow—driven by a villain from my castle—married, yet not known as a wife—her infant son, the heir of vast titles and estates, drowned in the river Eure!'—I was proceeding in lamentations like these,

these, when Gilbert advancing, threw himself at my feet.

'Know you not———?' said he, and stopped.

'What,' I exclaimed, 'do you mean?'

'Good God! is it possible?' he continued—'Are you indeed sir William Fitzhugh—the kind, the generous master whom I so irreparably injured? Oh! say—is the lady Theresa then mourning her lost child?'

'What rave you of Theresa? what know you of the Fitzhughs?'

'Remember you not, my lord,' returned he, 'this face? Time may have worn it strangely—upwards of twenty years ago you knew it well. I was the husband of Dorothy, the daughter of Theresa's nurse; 'twas I accompanied her when the infant child was supposed to be lost.'

"I shuddered," said sir William—'*Supposed* did you say?'

'How shall I speak?' continued Gilbert—'how declare it to you?—I am a villain. A sum of money, and a large quantity of jewels, were entrusted to our care for the support of the child.'

'Cruel wretch! I exclaimed,' said sir William; 'tempted by them, thou hast murdered thy wife and the beloved infant of Theresa.'

'Thank Heaven, that sin is not added to the list of crimes I have committed! In crossing the Eure, I, who carried the child, with difficulty escaped, whilst my unfortunate wife, borne away by the rapidity of the stream, was drowned, spite of my endeavours to save her. Tempted by the riches in my possession, I took the child with me the road to Scotland. Stopping at the foot of the mountain of Cheviot, there purchasing a flock of sheep, I brought up the noble infant till near five years old, when—mark the dispensations of Providence!—a band of

Scots burnt our cottage, and drove us with our sheep before them. The brave sir Robert Umfraville gave them battle; their leader, sir Richard Rutherford, and his five sons, were taken. Escaping, I fled to Scotland, afraid of a discovery; there did I exist (for, deprived of comfort, it was not living) upon my ill-gotten wealth, under the patronage of the Douglas family. Thus came I to be sent on the fatal expedition to Raby. A late remorse seized me as I passed the castle of the Fitzhughs, and I determined (small recompence for crimes so vast!) to save lady Cicely, if in my power—restore her to the earl, acknowledge my guilt, and deliver myself to justice. I ask not, I desire not, pardon—may my death expiate all!—ah! could it restore the lovely child to lord Beauchamp!'

" A hope," sighed sir William, " you, Thomalin, might be that lamented child, has supported me; you were at that age

found by sir Robert Umfraville; your air, your mien, at first sight bespoke you were noble; your features too—ah, may it prove so! and, oh! should it not, I have made you heir to all in my power to bestow; cheat me still with the delusion by acting as he would have done."

Struck dumb with wonder, with astonishment, we seemed like statues, whilst sir William opening a door, Gilbert entered—"If," said he, "the son of lady Theresa still lives, he bears on his left arm a deep scar; following some kids, he fell from a steep precipice, a sharp stone cut his arm, and still must a mark remain, reaching from his wrist to his elbow."

"I remember," said my husband, breaking silence, "such an accident happening, and ere the wound was healed, the Scots came—behold, here is the mark!" and baring his arm, it appeared from the elbow to the wrist.

"When

"When I bore to England," cried sir William, "the fair daughter of the count D'Aranjeus, she wore round her neck a gold chain, to which was clasped a cross; in the castle of Cutherstone, on the birth of her daughter, she, unloosing it, threw it round her infant, lamenting it was all the inheritance she derived from her parents—all she had to bestow on her child. This chain, Theresa's nurse informed me, was fastened with a secret spring by its mother round the neck of the little Beauchamp, and that none but she or her father could unloose it but by force; and whatever befel her, it would remain and identify her helpless infant."

"Ah! true it was," said Gilbert, "the child wore it; oft was I tempted by the richness of the ornament to tear it from his tender neck; yet reflecting some event hereafter might take place, when I might wish to prove an heir to the Beauchamps existed, for purposes I blush

to think of, was it smeared with a composition that disguised its colour; and this idea was carefully inculcated, that, born a slave, this was the badge of the family to whom he belonged—that he must carefully conceal it, lest he should be reclaimed."

"Behold then, my father." said the graceful youth, kneeling, "what pride for so many years has with painful anxiety guarded from all eyes as a mark of slavery—behold that chain and that cross, a mother's last blessing, which it is now my pride to reveal—oh! behold and bless your long-lost child—the son of lady Theresa!"

Sir William touching the secret spring, the cross opening disclosed a plait of hair; which kissing, he on his knees thanked God, who had thus miraculously restored to him the infant so long bewailed—restored him adorned with every virtue, with

with every accomplishment, to grace his rank, and dignify human nature.

"Behold!" he cried, "this was the hair of the count and countess D'Aranjeus—this a lock cut from the ringlets of their daughter, my adored Theresa. Oh!" continued he, with a thankful yet exulting air, "the curse, the fatal curse, I trust, is spent—thou art restored. How strong, powerful Nature, is thy impulse! it acknowledged thee for my son in the cave of Teesdale."

Then turning to me—"What are," he said, "my obligations to you, who discerned through the livery of the page the merit of the man? Ah Westmoreland, my noble friend! little did you think it was the child of Theresa, the grandson of Fitzhugh, you reared so charitably. How shall I evince my gratitude to you, who have given him all the martial and warlike accomplishments which so nobly dignify the house

of Raby, and render him a grace to the honours he of right inherits? Yes, at Agincourt nobly didst thou prove thy descent; the added arms thy gracious sovereign granted shall be worn proudly, because virtuously, by thy children's children."

Early the next morning we set out for Burgos, where we had the happiness to meet don Juan so much recovered as to accompany us to court. Don Juan the Second sat on the throne of Castile. His uncle Ferdinand, who had been joined in the regency with his mother, had, some time previous to this, ascended the Arragonian throne, since which period Catalina had the sole power. She, you will recollect, warmly espoused the cause of Theresa Fitzhugh, when her husband don Henry bore the sceptre. To her did sir William introduce his amiable grandson as Henry lord Beauchamp—to her alone was it disclosed

that

that I was the daughter of the earl of Westmoreland and Joan of Beaufort, descended equally with herself from John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster. She clasped me to her bosom, and vowed to Heaven her love and her protection.

Lord Beauchamp was acknowledged heir to the vast estates of D'Aranjeus.

Following the example of the queen regent, the courtiers vied in marks of kindness and flattering expressions.—Lord Beauchamp's graceful yet commanding manner was said to resemble the count D'Aranjeus; and those who still remembered his grandmother, donna Theresa, compared the sweetness of his countenance and disposition to hers, and his dark expressive eyes were said plainly to denote the noble family from which he sprung. Fearful, although a prisoner in England, the duke of Orleans might have emissaries near me, I passed for a native of Bretagne.

Sir William had written, immediately after he had recognised his grandson, to the earls of Warwick and Westmoreland, acquainting them with the discovery; but to the earl of Warwick he had not mentioned the marriage of lord Beauchamp.

Lady St. Aubin found means to inform us my father, though soothed by the gracious king, yet highly irritated at my flight and marriage, had declared I was sent to a convent of noble Burgundian ladies, nor meant to reveal to any one the step I had taken till my return to England.

Flattered and caressed, time stole away, yet still were our affairs unsettled, and many a lingering wish we cast towards the white cliffs of our country.

We received an answer meanwhile from the earl of Westmoreland which made us impatient to be gone. The health of the earl of Warwick declined apace,

apace, and the countess, who was step-mother to the late lord Beauchamp, would not fail to do all in her power to set aside any claim which would invalidate the right of her son to the title and estate of Warwick.

He assured me of his forgiveness, but that he would still conceal, even from my mother, a marriage which, unless the claims of my husband could be proved, would meet with her severest displeasure; that he would do all in his power to establish those claims, but that, did he not reach England whilst the present earl of Warwick lived, he doubted those claims, if prosecuted, would cause much bloodshed; and concluded with informing me my sister Jane deferred taking the veil, which she meant to do at Barking, till my return.

So flattering was our countenance, and so blessed in each other, that, almost without perceiving the lapse of time, a year

year had flown by us. Ah Matilda! as I reflect, it seems but a gay dream, and I ask myself—was it real? Happy as I was, that happiness was augmented (as it gave such pleasure to those I loved) by the birth of a son, the loveliest infant that ever gave joy to a mother; he was named after the king, who, with the queen regent, stood sponsors for him; and invested with the titles and estates of D'Aranjeus, to which lord Beauchamp was to be guardian, all objection was removed, as my son, born a Castilian, could inherit what lord Beauchamp, as a foreigner, could not, without vast contention, have been allowed.

When I found myself able to travel, it was agreed we should return to England, where our presence was so necessary; and the infant being fully invested, as far as his age would allow, with the large fortune of his great-grandmother, we went to take leave of the king and

Catalina

Catalina the regent. They would not hear of our quitting Spain, and insisted upon our staying till after a grand tournament and bull-baiting given in honour of a prince being born to Arragon. This was too great a distinction to be slighted. Lord Beauchamp entered the list; the plaudits of the Castilian ladies were loud in favour of the English knight, who justified their praise by carrying off successively every prize.

Our worthy friend don Juan overheated himself this day, which bringing on a return of his disorder, he languished near a month, and expired in the arms of sir William, who most severely felt the loss of so constant a friend. He evinced his attachment by leaving very considerable possessions to my infant son.

After weeping over the loss we had sustained, again we prepared to leave Castile, but were now plainly told the

infant count could not hold the immense possessions, his right, in Castile, if he lived in England. The queen regent promised to be herself his guardian—he should be brought up in the palace, and treated as a child of royalty. Provided lord Beauchamp came to receive them, the rents of the count's estates should be his till he came of age to do homage for them; but that, did he persist in taking him to England, the decree which gave him the title and lands would be of no effect.

We begged a few days to consider of proposals so important, which were spent in the greatest anxiety. Sir William's presence, as also Gilbert's (who, penitent, had received forgiveness, and lived in the family more as a friend than servant), were equally necessary in England to identify lord Beauchamp's birth, &c.; to which period I looked forward with triumph, when he whose birth shone

through

through the mean habit of a page should be acknowledged at the court of Henry as lord D'Agincourt—as heir of the noble families of Warwick and Fitzhugh—as descended from one of the most noble houses in Spain. To view him adorning his high rank with his virtues—this indeed flattered me; yet to know, so accomplished and so noble, he would have singled out Cicely from all the surrounding beauties, was more solid joy to my fond heart, for he seemed to live but in my sight.

It was finally agreed the young count should be left with the queen, sir William proposing to retire to Spain, and reside constantly with him, as soon as lord Beauchamp's claims in England were adjusted, and that we should then divide our time between the two countries.

We now bade adieu to the Castilian monarch and all our friends, and after

weeping.

weeping over and caressing my child, I resigned him to his nurse. In a state of mind which admitted not of conversation, we set out on our return home.

The court of Arragon was at Barcelona; thither it was settled we were to go, having received an invitation to visit, ere we embarked, don Alonzo, who had succeeded his father don Ferdinand in the throne. A ship was fitted out there ready to receive us. We travelled slowly; sir William's strength appeared unequal to the voyage; his health had visibly declined since the death of don Juan, and parting with his infant grandson had given an additional shock to his spirits.

From don Alonzo we received a most polite and courteous reception. He warmly entreated our stay till after a grand tournament, which was shortly to be held on account of the princess Maria being betrothed to her cousin, king John

of

of Castile. Lord Beauchamp's fame had reached the king of Arragon, who wished him on this occasion to display his prowess, not doubting, he added, but to behold him, as the court of Castile had done, bearing off every prize.

Sir William rather regained his strength, which made us still linger at Barcelona.

The tournament drew nigh, and the city was thronged with Spanish, Italian, French, English, and Moorish knights, many of whom were attended with splendid retinues.

The idea of our worthy and inestimable friend don Juan was for ever present to me, and fearful of the venerable sir William, I would have hastened our departure; but he, ever proud to display to the Spaniards the accomplished grandson of D'Aranjeus, declared his wish to comply with the king's entreaties, and enter the lists. Lord Beauchamp, no

less

less eager to maintain that fame he had already acquired, and which added lustre to his birth, was no less desirous of signalizing his prowess. I gave a tardy consent.

The day arrived. I was seated next the queen, who was Maria of Castile, and assisted in distributing the prizes to the victors. Lord Beauchamp was the hero of the day; whatever he contended for he gained. The camp, the palace, the street, re-echoed with the praises of the English knight, and flowers and perfumes were thrown upon him from the windows.

Sir William's youth seemed to be renewed in the praises bestowed so unsparingly upon his grandson, and even I forgot this exertion might fatally affect the yet not established health of this venerable parent. The next morning I was again seated by the queen, but had no favour to bestow upon my lord. The king begged

begged he would not that day enter the lists, as the knights, disheartened by his so repeatedly carrying off the prize, had many of them quitted Barcelona.

The ladies, who were assembled from every kingdom in Spain to the tournament, no longer seemed to interest themselves who were unhorsed, or which knight was conqueror. All eyes were bent to the seat of the sovereign, at whose feet stood lord Beauchamp, whose ardour could be no longer restrained than the close of the day; when kneeling, he begged the king would allow him the following morning to give a general challenge. The boon was granted, and ere the east was streaked with gold, the whole court of Arragon was seated in expectation of his appearance. Such an assemblage of valour and beauty was a glorious sight.

All eyes were fixed upon the western gate as the rising sun cast his first rays upon

upon the silver armour of lord Beauchamp. The heralds proclaimed his approach. He was mounted on a milk-white steed, a present from the king of Castile; his armour, bestowed by the princess Maria of Arragon, he gained the first day's tournament; a large plume of feathers, snow-white, waved over his morion; his shield the same he always wore, and presented to him by sir William—the device upon it, the sun bursting from a cloud—the motto, *Not lost, though obscured;* round the edge went a foliage of oak-leaves and acorns, interwoven with myrtle. He was followed by his squire, bearing his lance; behind whom came a train of pages dressed in flame-colour.

Lord Beauchamp rode round the lists, his visor raised, to where the king sat with the judges of the combat—where gracefully bowing, he begged permission

to

to have the challenge read aloud, then retired to the bottom of the field.

A horn was sounded, and the defiance proclaimed in Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, Morisco, and English; which done, he rode round, his lance in the rest, three times.

A considerable time elapsed ere any one appeared to encounter him, when a Moorish knight, of the kingdom of Grenada, begged permission to enter the lists. Ashamed to be outdone by an infidel in courage, a crowd of knights of different nations now advanced, each one entreating to break a lance with the English sun, for so he was styled. In their turns he encountered a number, who repented of their temerity, for the shivered lances bestrewed the plain.

Thus engrossing all eyes, enchanting all hearts, again was lord Beauchamp the hero—his name was echoed as conqueror. It was already noon; no respite had

had he taken, nor any refreshment. A noise at the eastern entrance made me turn my head; it was caused by the appearance of a tall, elegant knight, mounted on a black steed, which seemed to spurn the ground; its caparisons were gold. The armour of the knight was, as his courser, black, and thickly studded with gold, which represented the heliotrope, or sun-flower. On his shield was engraven the story of Paris carrying off Helen; the motto—*So the gods decreed.* A wreath of lilies and roses encircled the whole. A plume of black feathers, intermixed with gold lilies, waved lightly over his helmet. His visor was close; without raising it, he rode up to the throne, and made to the sovereign and judges an obeisance, but spoke not. He turned to where I sat, and bowing, looked at the bevy of beauties with which I was encircled. Meanwhile a page, whose dress, like his master's, was embroidered with

the

the sunflower, announced that the sable knight had travelled a vast distance to be present at a tournament so famous—that he burned to encounter the English Sun, whom he publicly declared a false traitor, utterly unworthy the name of knight.

I saw sir William, forgetting his age, start up; he was ready to leap over the barrier, and correct this saucy knight, but his age and reflection checked him. He advanced towards me.

"Who," said I, "is he that so basely traduces my lord?"

"Perhaps," rejoined sir William, the first emotion of anger being over, "it is some Moorish knight, who thus tries to irritate and throw him off his guard; but I fear not for my gallant child—quickly shall the sable warrior feel the prowess of the English Sun—see, he turns, and eagerly demands the offered combat.

 Soon,

Soon, with their lances in the rest, they encountered. The address the unknown knight displayed made me tremble for the fame—for the safety—for the life of lord Beauchamp. Now the one, now the other, seemed to have the advantage. How did alternate hope and fear then rack me! At length, after many trials of skill, which lasted for some hours, it appeared to be finished by the sable knight being unhorsed.

The welkin resounded with the shouts, with the plaudits of the multitude, as lord Beauchamp stood over the fallen chief.

"Ere I suffer you to rise," he said, "here solemnly ask pardon for your expressions, and kneeling with your vizor raised, before this noble king and his courtly assembly of knights and ladies, to whom you so vilely aspersed me, own yourself to have spoken falsely; then promise you will proclaim, through

every

every country you shall pass, I am a true and loyal knight."

"Never," replied, in a haughty voice, the unknown knight, "will I raise my vizor to thee; never shall it be said the blood of Valois sued for pardon of a base-born hind, who invidiously ravished from him all he held dear."

Lord Beauchamp started, and loosed from his grasp, the vanquished knight arose and exclaimed—"Let at once my life be sacrificed, and treachery completed, or this deadly quarrel be equally decided by the sword.

"See," he cried, unfastening a scarf that twined around him, and shook it in the wind with an air of triumph—"know this was the gift of the lady Cicely. At Agincourt, thou pretender to knighthood, true thou conquered—I at Bidet; there did the mistress of my heart tie this round her happy lover."

I saw the scarf—it was that which, at

our last parting, I had given the duke of Orleans; the voice too flashed upon my soul a fatal conviction it was the rash, the headstrong prince himself.

Had you, my dear Matilda, beheld the various emotions which were pictured on my countenance, you might form some faint idea of what passed within me. I sat transfixed—the passions which alternately struggled in my frame deprived me of utterance. I saw the gleam of their swords—I saw lord Beauchamp inflamed by rage—by jealousy. No longer master of himself, and regardless of his life, he panted but for the blood of Orleans, who, apparently agitated with similar passions, yet more upon his guard, defended himself with infinite address. The silver armour of my husband was streaked with blood.

I leaped from my seat—"Oh! stop," I exclaimed, "this fatal combat!"—then uttering a piercing shriek, fell; nature,

wound

wound up to the height of agony, could bear it no longer.

"Oh, save him! save him!—let me not be his murderer!"—and I grasped, with a convulsive motion, the arm of the princess, against whom I fell.

Again I lifted my eyes, but to see my husband extended on the plain, drenched in gore—the warden, who had come to forbid the combat, near him; and the duke, overthrowing all that opposed, gallopped off the field.

I disengaged myself from those around —every one gave way, and I flung myself down by my lord. Sir William knelt by him, and unfastened his helmet for air.

"Oh! speak," I franticly exclaimed, "my lover—my husband!—oh! say, yet you love your wretched wife!—oh! say, my dear lord, where is this fatal wound!"

He turned, with a dying look, to me. —"Yes," he said, "Cicely, whilst this

heart vibrates, it holds thee, even in death, dearer than life itself. Thinkest thou I could believe the vile suggestions of the false duke?—Ah, no! but his end was answered; inflamed with rage, I was no longer able to command my own, or ward his blows. My life is forfeited—it ebbs apace. Adieu, my father! tell my son I died in defending the fame of his mother, and the honour of his house."

His head was on my bosom as, in a hasty manner, the last rites of the holy church were administered.

"This one, this last embrace!"—and the cold lips of my dying lord were laid to mine. "Oh! till we meet in another world, farewell! Cherish, my beloved wife, the memory of him who, too happy in possessing you, thought of no heaven but what he enjoyed. Oh Cicely! I have loved to idolatry——"

At that moment, Matilda, the last

breath,

breath, the last sigh of lord Beauchamp vapoured into air.

In the madness of frenzy I rose, and snatching the sword steeped in blood, would have plunged it in my heart, had not my arm been arrested. I rent my head-dress, and wildly called for vengeance, nor would suffer the body to be removed till I was torn from it by force.

Does not my pen mark the page with blood? Is it possible that, feeling such misery, I survived? Yes, I did survive—nay, still drag on existence. How oft, oh Death! have I called on thee!—thou camest then unthought of, unsuspected, and cut short a life dearer to me than my own. Do I live?—do I wake?—is it real? Was I then the wife, the happy wife, of lord Beauchamp, or was it only a gay illusion?

My head turns round, Matilda. Oh! I could rave for ever of my early love—of my husband—of my adored Beau-

 champ.

champ. Whilst reason hovers over me. I must drop the pen—it cannot, must not yet be resumed by your

CICELY.



HAVE you not, Matilda, heard sufficient of my sad story, that you entreat, that you conjure me to proceed? Sure this heart must be firmer than adamant thus to retrace scenes in which I so severely suffered! Gracious Heaven! have I not already written what is engraven in letters of blood upon my brain?—that brain—this heart—oh its palpitations! Matilda, never may you feel as I have felt!—may all misfortunes be far from you, my dearest friend, prays fervently your

CICELY.

AGAIN.



AGAIN, Matilda, you write, and ask me questions I cannot refuse to answer—yet how, but by continuing my history, shall I answer you? The recapitulation of past events had almost distracted me—more composed, I will endeavour to proceed—yet how proceed?

At first, frantic with grief, I raved of my husband—of my child; then, reduced to a state of mental imbecility, sat for days, for weeks, in unbroken silence—I heard without knowledge—saw without notice. This part of my life was one dark, dreary, comfortless night; what I must relate then is for some time the history of my friends, not myself.

How early in life was I thus widowed! At an age when girls are scarce suffered to think for themselves, or have

learnt the necessary accomplishments, I was a mother to a child—a child who could never know any other parent!

My husband's remains were magnificently interred, by the command of the king of Arragon, among the ancient counts of Catalonia, from whom the noble house of D'Aranjeus was lineally descended.

The sorrow of sir William was not loud, but deep and unbounded; yet, to support me, he strove to bear up against it.

In a capuchin's dress, a person demanded of sir William a private audience. Though ushered only by his habit, his voice, his manner, demanded confidence, and sir William gave it him. His advice was, that an immediate voyage was necessary—"Certainly here you are not safe—the duke of Orleans is too sure at liberty. Let the beauteous widow be securely placed with her friends, then

then may you return to guard the young count, who meanwhile, under the protection of Catalina, must be far from danger."

Gilbert, why we could not guess, had never been seen since the second day of the tournament; despairing of finding, we embarked without him.

Imagine me, Matilda, again on shipboard, helpless as a child—the venerable sir William sinking fast into the grave, bent down by age and afflictions. With my eyes fixed or roving, I would sit, giving no other signs of life than frequent deep and heavy groans. Thus seated one day, sir William, with his looks anxiously placed on me, said—"I feel my strength sink apace—I shall never visit England. Would to God I I was but allowed to live till I delivered this unhappy victim to her parents! But it is not permitted me. Will you, generous stranger, take the charge I can-

not perform? Ah! the curse, the fatal curse of D'Aranjeus still rests upon me!"

"Fear not, my dear sir William—I trust you will again behold your native land. Should it be otherwise directed, I piously will perform your request. I solemnly promise to guard, at the hazard of my life, the fair mourner; death alone shall prevent my delivering her to her parents. Know it is to no ignoble hands you entrust her—'tis to Louis duke of Orleans, father to the rash youth who so fatally at Barcelona encountered lord Beauchamp. He thus vows to guard his widowed love even against his son."

Sir William started.

"What!" he exclaimed, "is it possible you are he supposed to be murdered by the command of the duke of Burgundy—whose death threw France into such tumults, and the world into wonder?"

"Behold," replied the duke, "this arm

arm attests me deprived of a hand by the——villains."

He now recited all the story already related to you—his wonderful escape—and that lady St. Aubin, afraid of some rash attempt of her brother, had bribed a domestic of his to convey to her any intelligence he could of his master's proceedings, who informed her that Orleans, setting out secretly and in disguise, had taken shipping for Spain. With this news lady St. Aubin was instantly acquainted, who communicating it to her father, he, accompanied by his faithful domestic, began immediately his journey thither. Too late did he arrive to prevent the fatal rencontre; as he entered the city of Barcelona, the solemn procession of lord Beauchamp's interment filled the streets. Dreading almost to inquire, he learnt the cause of the pompous display of woe, and afraid of some

fresh

fresh attempt of his son, resolved to urge our departure, and escort me to Raby.

It appeared to sir William strangely mysterious that the duke should be at liberty, when he ought to have been confined as a prisoner in England. Sure it could not be; yet there hung an air of secrecy about the sable knight that corroborated the suspicion; he had avowed himself French too; as for my frantic expressions, they were not regarded.

The duke had now full exercise for his humanity. Sir William seemed fast sinking into the grave—each day he grew weaker. The charitable prince was his nurse, his confessor, his comforter; to him did the dying knight explain whatever could authenticate the marriage of his daughter, the birth of her child, or elucidate his escape and wonderful discovery, in order that I might be acknowledged as widow of lord Beauchamp, and my son as heir to the titles

and

and estates of Warwick and Fitzhugh of Cutherstone. The papers and other documents respecting those matters (of which the earl of Warwick possessed proper duplicates) were buried, together with a large sum of money, beneath the floor of the cave he had so long inhabited in the forest of Teesdale. To me was the money bequeathed, in case I recovered; if not, it was to be bestowed on the monastery of Athelstan, for holy prayers to save the souls of the Fitzhughs.

Scarce had the venerable grandsire of my beloved lord settled these worldly concerns when he was summoned to the abodes of bliss. Insensible to all, I was happily as perfectly unconscious of my loss.

We were off the coast of Portugal, and (the wind allowing the pious purpose) the ship was put into a small harbour, above which rose a hill, where stood

stood a convent of Benedictine monks. Thither was the body of sir William Fitzhugh carried for interment. He, who had wept over the funerals of almost every one dear to him, was attended by strangers to his own. No child to lament—no fond matron to close his eyes—the generous duke and his faithful Jaques performed, with charitable hands, those pious offices; whilst I, so nearly, so deeply interested in this beloved parent of my lost lord, smiled as I followed instinctively the procession.

Thus laid at rest from all the troubles which surrounded him ever since his marriage with donna Theresa, sir William of Cutherstone was entombed far, far from his country, in a strange land, like the fair heiress of the rash count D'Aranjeus.

The duke left money for a certain number of masses to be said for the repose of his own soul, and those of his friends,

friends, ordering a plain monument to be erected, on which were to be engraven the arms of Fitzhugh, his name, and the date of the year.

Again we set sail, and shortly espied the shores of England. Sir William had begged we should land at Tinmouth, the prior of whose stately monastery was his tried friend. Here I might be safe till my family sent an escort for me.

We had passed the mouth of the river Were when we were boarded by a Scotch pirate. No sooner did the commander behold me than, swearing a tremendous oath, he ordered me on board his own ship. Unknown to him was I followed by the duke and Jaques, and immediately the sails were hoisted, and a strong wind bore us along the coast of Northumberland, whilst the Spaniards, rejoicing to escape, steered for their own land.

See me now, Matilda, landed in Scotland—conveyed to a strong castle, built on

on an arm of the sea. Behold me viewed with scorn—with contempt—with looks of vengeance, by the furious lady Douglas; for to her was I delivered by the captain, who was one of the chiefs in the fatal expedition when I was forced from Raby, but who escaping, had turned pirate, and recognising me, thought, by securing such a prize, to regain the favour of his lady, who had taken every means to oppress his family, irritated at the ill success of the former expedition.

Turning from me, lady Douglas viewed the duke, and haughtily exclaimed—"Who are these thou hast brought me?"

"I know not," replied the emissary of her cruelty; "it was unknown to me they followed."

"Lady," said the duke, "we are French—allies to your country. We embarked in hopes of reaching the port of Rouen; the base Spaniards, to be possessed of our wealth, refused to land us,

and

and forced us into the boat with the English lady."

This well-invented tale was believed.

You will perhaps, my dear, wonder at the princely duke thus demeaning himself on my account, but the lively interest his amiable daughter took in my welfare made him eager to serve me; he thought himself bound to oblige her—thus making a late and (all now in his power) a small reparation for his treatment of the duchess Adeline, her mother. Now left wholly in his charge, the noble Orleans thought himself doubly bound, by my misery and his promise to sir William, to guard me at the hazard of his life. My misfortunes were owing to his son, and he watched to alleviate them. After restoring me to my friends, he meant again to retire to Bidet, there to spend his days in prayer and penitence.

Short-sighted mortals! how vain are your

your resolves! I, who so late sat planning in the court of Castile schemes of future happiness, and as I pressed to my bosom my infant son, fancied him equalling his father in every graceful, every martial accomplishment; or, as I sat the envy of surrounding Spanish beauties, bestowing on my husband at Barcelona, successively, each prize he contended for—sir William exulting in his grandson, as the air resounded with his praise! Ah! then had I foreseen the misery which so speedily overwhelmed me, what had been my feelings!—but they could not have been deeper than what I have suffered.

Separated from my child—my husband cut off in the midst of his fame, in the spring of his days—deprived of sir William when I was reduced to a state of helpless melancholy, not sensible of my loss—in the same state a prisoner to the fierce enemy of the Nevilles—in a country

country where the reins of government trembled in the hands of the regent—what hope was there of safety but in the protecting care of the father of him who at Barcelona sacrificed my husband?

Lady Douglas, pleased with the conversation and graceful manners of the disguised duke, entertained him at her own table till she was obliged to attend the court at Stirling. Reluctantly she bade him adieu, after having given him, some time before, leave, which she could not well retract, to hire a vessel, that he might convey himself, as he alleged, to France. This ship lay-to beneath the windows of the castle, waiting a fair wind.

She left me behind her too, having no apprehensions of my escape. Insensible of my confinement, all places were become alike to me; for scarcely did I seem to notice the change of day and night. But the only difficulty which, it appear-

ed

ed to my friends, could prevent my escape, was how I could be conveyed out of the castle, and elude the guards.

The wind changed—the sails were unfurled—they fluttered to the breeze. Jaques appeared at the gate, followed by two sailors bearing strong liquors.

" Behold," said he, " Scotchmen, we leave you, but not without our good wishes. Our master sends to you a present; taste—and drinking, give us a good benison, and pray for a prosperous voyage."

The gates were opened; the villain, who twice before had seized me, and now had the charge of the castle, invited Jaques to partake of his master's bounty; the wine made them talkative—they began to recount their adventures—then more boisterous, vaunted of their courage, and their noise increased with every glass—till stupified by the effects of what

what they had drank, they fell down insensible to every thing.

Jaques rifled the pockets of my jailer, and taking the keys, opened the doors of my apartment. Thrusting the damsel that attended me into a closet, he fastened up the entrance, and led me out of this dismal castle. The duke assisted in conveying me on shipboard. Rejoicing in their success, the vessel seemed to fly before the wind. We passed the mouth of the Tweed, so famous for dividing the rival kingdoms, the next morning, and at noon passed by the walls of Warkworth castle. Ignorant of whom it contained, my beloved sister Percy saw the vessel pass. Ah! had she seen—could she have known me—what pain would have filled her gentle heart, as I stood leaning over the side, viewing with idiot gaze the water, as it seemed to slide from beneath us! But as if suddenly animated, raising my eyes, I threw

them

them on the isle of Coquet and its monastery, and shifting my position, ran across the deck, with my eyes fixed upon Warkworth. Sighing bitterly, I cried—"Yes, I tell you, Beauchamp, I come;" and ere I could be caught, had nearly fallen overboard.

This was the first time since lord Beauchamp's interment that I had uttered any thing beyond a monosyllable, never appearing to have the slightest recollection of what had happened. Now the hopes of the duke revived, who had despaired of my senses ever returning,

The wind, which had hitherto been favourable, now veered in quick succession to every point of the compass. The captain, predicting a storm, gave directions to keep the vessel out to sea, fearful of the rocks which guarded the coast of Northumberland. To add to the danger, the days were now very short—it was the last week in December. I had

been

been twelve months a mother—how small a portion of that time had my infant been pressed to my throbbing bosom! Ah! short but happy days!—with the very idea comes joy, comes rapture. Ah! no, no, my Matilda! it is torture, it is agony, to think of those moments. What do I rave of? Let me turn to the regular narration.

We were near the mouth of the river which waters the beautiful vale where Bothal Castle stands, when the sailors saw their prediction verified.

A sudden gust of wind blew us along the coast—again were we becalmed—a thick fog arose, which involved land, sea, and sky, in one universal obscurity. The useless sails hung idly from the yards; the thunder rolled at a vast distance, and the lightnings were reflected by the waves, as they danced along, rendering horror still more horrible. No cheering ray illumined our evening hopes, and

 the

the night closed thick around; the noise of the thunder grew nearer till it burst upon us, and echoed from the shore in dreadful rollings—the lightning shot in quick succession all around us. Ignorant of their exact situation, the sailors at midnight saw a light, to which we appeared very near; it was conjectured to glimmer from the stately priory of Tinmouth. This struck the sailors with fresh dread, as the wind had again veered, and blew with violence on the shore; the tide too conspired to drive us on the coast; the sails rent into shreds, and fluttered in the air; the helm no longer answered to the pilot's skill, and driven by every wave, we approached hastily to destruction; the hail beat upon the deck. Loud as the thunder was, it became still more dreadful as it reverberated from rock to rock, drowning at intervals the roaring of the wind; now a vast sheet of fire illumed the horizon, and flashed a sad conviction

viction on the mind of the people on board, as it momentarily shewed the castle and rocky haven of Tinmouth.

Scarce had they time to reflect on their danger ere the vessel pitched on a rock. The noise of the sailors, whose efforts were fruitless—the dashing of the waves over the ship, and the rush of the wind, aided by the thunder—altogether formed a crash most dreadfully tremendous, while the lightning alone shewed at intervals the danger.

Matilda, to this scene did I, as it were, awake from a long sleep, with a faint recollection of past events.

Anxious for my preservation, the duke, while the ship was beating on the rocks, supported me on the deck, ready to seize any opportunity of saving her for whom he had ventured so much. Signals of distress had been made, and all eyes were anxiously fixed on the shore, as a long train of monks, bearing

torches, issued out of a postern-gate, taking the road towards the beach nearest our vessel.

"Alas!" I exclaimed, "too late they come to our rescue!"

"Cicely!" said the duke, "is it possible? Good God, I thank thee, my prayers are heard!"

"Sure," I returned, "my senses still deceive me; is that the voice of the recluse of Bidet?—and if the lightning's glare beams truly, sure 'tis that venerable form. Oh say, why are you here? and where has her wayward fate thrown the lost, the wretched Cicely?"

A boat approached carrying lights, and the duke had not time for reply, but hastily assisted Jaques to place me in it; the crew followed. We reached the shore with difficulty; too eager to land, all attempted at once, and the boat overset.

I remember no more till I found myself

self in bed, and surrounded by strangers. I inquired of my situation—in the monastery of Tinmouth!—what had become of the crew?—all had perished but myself and a foreigner.

"May I not see him?"

"Rest satisfied; he is safe, but you cannot see him."

At length they yielded to my importunities. Two monks supported him—it was not the duke (ah wretched Cicely!), but Jaques, that entered my apartment.

"Oh! say, where is your master?"

He shook his head, and his tears declared what his tongue refused to describe; nor had his feelings sufficient courage to say—he is gone for ever.

"Ah!" said I, "generously has he protected the sad wanderer, Cicely!—never can she evince her gratitude. Oh! seek, if you have piety, for his body!"

The offer of a princely reward actu-

ated many to the search, and operated as a better argument for their activity. But though anxiously sought for, a whole day elapsed without any account of the body being found; the following night the retreating waves left it on the beach.

The tidings reached me. I arose, and wrapping my mantle round me, hurried to the window. It was the dawn of day; a number of vessels, many of them dismasted, waited the returning tide to bring them into harbour; the neighbouring shores wore the mark of universal ruin.

The gate opened which led from the harbour; a number of monks, whose dark garments contrasted the snow, passed through it with mournful steps and downcast looks. The procession appeared winding up the road which led to the castle; Jaques accompanied, bending, in all the agony of grief, over the body of his

his master, which was borne by the good fathers.

I looked with aching eyes and bleeding heart till my head turned round, and I sunk as lifeless as he who, extended on his cold bier, was unconscious of my grief. On reviving, I beheld the faithful Jaques kneeling beside me, and exclaiming in an agony, as he wrung his clasped hands—"Oh speak, lady! leave me not thus—a stranger in an unknown land!"

Reviving from misery by degrees, I consulted with this tried domestic, and we resolved the remains of the noble Louis should be privately interred. Long ere this, all Paris had witnessed the splendid funeral of the duke of Orleans, and its churches had resounded with masses for the repose of his soul; the duchess Valentina had importuned heaven and its saints with vain prayers and supplications; but Valentina could not more

sincerely deplore the supposed death of the prince than he was now bewailed by his grateful Jaques and her whom so kindly he had protected. Ah! sure thy prayers, thy penitence, would find acceptance at the throne of grace, and atone for the crimes, for the levities of youth!

Recollect you not, my Matilda, in the beautiful conventual church at Tinmouth, near the high altar, a white marble monument, on which this was the only inscription—"*Hope for mercy!*" beneath which are the fleurs-de-lis of France, surrounded with branches of palm and cypress. This singular monument, I dare say, would excite your curiosity. When again you view it, my Matilda, that heart of yours, ever disposed to commiserate the unhappy, will heave a sigh to the memory of the preserver of your friend; and as you bend over it, recollecting many passages of my life, your tears shall drop on the marble, and you will

reflect that beneath it, buried in obscurity, lies the mortal part of the duke of Orleans.

After the interment, Jaques came into my apartment, and long we sat in solemn silence, lamenting the noble prince. Rising, I traversed the room with an aching heart, casting a look of anguish on the sea, which had thus cruelly deprived us of our defender.

The sun was sinking red in the west, and the snow spangled as the rays fell aslant on it; the tempest had entirely subsided, and the full tide covered the fatal rocks on which our ship had split. Ah, thou deceitful element! when Providence raised me up a protector, ere I was well sensible I needed one, thou snatchedst him from me! Who now shall guard the lost Cicely?"

"Ah! would to God I could!" replied Jaques. Then kneeling, he caught my garments—"Grant me, lady, my first

 request;

request; oh! grant it for the sake of the gallant prince with whom at Bidet I was immured—allow me to spend the remainder of my days in your service—yet may Jaques save you. Much did my master fear for you, dreading the rash, the ardent temper of his son. Ah! why was I preserved, while my noble lord lies cold as the earth which covers him."

I bade him rise, and holding out my hand, exclaimed—"Thou faithful follower of the royal Orleans, restored to her friends, Cicely shall cherish thy age; she will endeavour to prove herself not ungrateful; at Raby she will try to soften thy loss by her friendship; we will weep by turns, and console each other.

"But tell me how came the duke here? Relate all thou knowest—I have much to learn; since the fatal conflict at Barcelona, all was night; silent and dreary,

dreary, it told me not of woe, nor joy, nor grief, till I awoke to shipwreck."

Jaques now proceeded to inform me of all I have related to you. Learning we were at the very place sir William meant us to land at, I resolved immediately to demand an audience of the prior, and if I found he was the friend of sir William, to reveal myself to him, and beg an escort to Raby; but whilst I spoke to this purpose, a loud knocking was heard at the gates, and quickly the frozen courts resounded to the hoofs of many horses. Supposing the prior would now be engaged, I declined the projected interview till morning, and dismissing Jaques, retired to the room allotted for my repose. I sat down meditating upon my sad fate.

My lost, my loved, my lamented husband, filled my soul with grief; now I viewed him as he declared his love for me to father Ambrose, the contending

passions marked with strong expression on his fine countenance; now imagination carried me to the castle of Bidet, where scarce could I be brought to credit the evidence of my senses; now I fancied the venerable sir William bending over him, when the graceful youth, kneeling, cried, as he pulled out the chain and cross—"Behold your long-lost child—the son of lady Theresa!"

Again the scene shifted—the court of Arragon was assembled—the air was rent with acclamations—ah! now he lay bleeding at my feet. "Oh!" I exclaimed, "Beauchamp! Beauchamp! do I live?—do I wake?—what am I now?—was I not so late in Spain, happy above the lot of mortality, for sir William beheld and blessed me.

"I had a child too—why leave that precious pledge of affection, so dear to its wretched mother? Alas! does it live, helpless babe! it has but one parent to

guard

guard it—one how unfit for the charge! Oh! I did but rave—sure I dreamt but of happiness—I have no child—I have had no husband—no fond, no tender lover died for me!—What! is sir William Fitzhugh dead?—the princely duke too? It is but some horrid dream; yet has not Jaques been with me—would he deceive? Ah no! I feel it is a sad, sad certainty of misery."

My brain seemed to unsettle; I arose from the bed, as a footstep in the adjoining apartment alarmed me, and endeavoured to calm my emotion. I went to the window, which overlooked the sea; the retiring tide lashed in hollow murmurs against the foot of the rock on which the castle is built. The moon, which was sinking in the heavens, threw a faint radiance over the prospect; at intervals I caught a glimpse of a white sail in the moonbeams; a gentle breeze seemed to waft the vessel from land, and the

sea,

sea, as if satiated with fury, was calm as a lake.

This was a season to reflect what yet might befal me ere again I reached Raby. My father, mother, each sister and brother, rose in succession to my mind, conjuring up a fresh train of ideas to torment. Forgetting myself, I exclaimed with emphasis—"Jane, my noble-minded sister, has the fierce Douglas wreaked her vengeance yet on thee? Surely Cicely's sufferings may satiate her cruelty."

The hasty opening of the door made me turn round; a graceful figure, clad in deep mourning, entered—she rushed into my arms. My dear Matilda, it was Jane herself!

Shall I attempt to describe my feelings? Joy, grief, surprise, assailed my heart at once. Locked in each other's arms, we remained long without speaking. At length she cried—"Good St. Cuthbert, I thank thee! again do I embrace

brace my darling Cicely! Alas! my sister, your looks too truly testify what you have sustained since last we parted."

"How is it, my sister," I exclaimed, "you are here?"

She informed me that, anxious for my safe return, which the earl had informed her would be soon, she had undertaken a pilgrimage to Lindisferne, where, though not permitted to enter the church dedicated to the holy St. Cuthbert, yet there, by means of my brother Henry, made her offerings. She had come from Warkworth that day on horseback; the rest of the journey she had performed on foot, though her attendants were mounted, and had hoped ere dark to have reached Tinmouth, which the thickness of the snow prevented her from doing.

In the morning I saw my brother Henry, and presented Jaques to lady Jane as the faithful servant of Monsieur

Bidet,

Bidet, to whose charge I had been committed in France, relating to her our being carried into Scotland—my obligations to Monsieur Bidet—with our fatal shipwreck; resolving to conceal my adventures even from her till I had seen my father.

The prior, informed of my quality, now came to visit me, but I found him not the person I hoped for. Sir William's friend had been dead some time; this grieved me much, as he was the monk of Fountaine Abbey whom sir William had mentioned as mediator between the earl of Warwick and lord Beauchamp, and who was translated to Tinmouth much about the period that sir William left Fountaine for the hermitage in the forest of Teesdale.

The prior next morning escorted us as far as Newcastle, from whence a messenger was sent to Raby, where the earl was, to inform him of my approach.

Bidding

Bidding adieu to the prior, we proceeded to Auckland, where we slept, to avoid Durham, the plague raging there at that time.

Again, Matilda, did I enter the gates of Raby, where, ranged in two lines, stood each domestic of the castle; many of them had lived in the family ever since the earl had first been lord of Raby, and by him I had been taught to pay a deference to their grey hairs—to respect their long and faithful services. I alighted, and thought to have walked through them; but their tears, their looks of sadness, their expressions, overcame me; and I should have sunk to the ground, had I not been caught by Hugh, an ancient servant of the earl, who had the charge of lord Beauchamp when first taken into the family.

"Alas! for pity," he cried, "my sweet lady, die not thus!"

He would have borne me in his arms, but,

but, tottering under the burden, was surrounded by numbers, each one eager to approach me. Almost lifeless, I was conveyed into the apartment, where sat, in mournful expectation of my arrival, the earl and countess, with my brother Thomas.

My mother rose to meet me, but her Cicely's altered looks struck her. She turned pale—her limbs refused their office, and she sunk again on her seat.

The earl endeavoured to give me air, for the closeness of the room had caused me to faint. At length, languidly raising my eyes, in a faint accent I said—"Oh Providence! I thank thee; I shall die in my native land! I shall expire at the feet of my parents!"

The countess seemed to gain animation from my voice; rising, she embraced me, and a mother's blessing infused new life into my care-worn bosom.

Ah! my brother too!—what did I feel

as

as you pressed me to your bosom!—you who, discerning the merit of my loved, my lamented lord, took him to your heart—called him friend—nor in the greatness of his merit regarded the apparent meanness of his birth!

I retired to my chamber, but not to rest; a thousand tormenting images presented themselves to my bewildered imagination. What! was I really at Raby? —beneath the roof of lord Westmoreland? Had he, who was brought up on the charity of the Nevilles, who left with me their towers—a page—been my husband?—the rightful heir of the Beauchamps and D'Aranjeus—the grandson of sir William Fitzhugh—the friend the most esteemed of the earl of Westmoreland?

Weak and fatigued, I still repeatedly rose during the night to look out of the window, and convince myself it was

Raby Castle indeed, and no false illusion.

With trembling steps I bent my way in the morning to the hall, where the table was spread for breakfast. The sad contrast to those gaudy dreams that had flitted through my brain in Castile overcame me—sir William, his amiable grandson, both dead!—a widow, yet bearing not the name of my husband!—mother to a lovely infant, heir to vast estates, yet in England unknown—unacknowledged even by his own parent!—yet had I to conceal (for such was my father's command) my misfortunes, and at that moment found a part to act I was unable to sustain:—all these reflections rushed upon me at once. I threw myself upon a seat, and clasping my hands together, burst into an agony of tears.

The countess, most maternally kind, threw her arms around me.

"What mean," said she, "Cicely, those

those tears?—you rejoice not with us that you are restored to your family—some secret, some hidden grief corrodes you—speak, my child!"

I spoke not; but raising my eyes to heaven, sat as it were transfixed—a monument of grief. The earl put his arm through mine, and led me into another apartment.

"Compose yourself," said my father, "nor, by giving way to your emotions, awaken suspicions in the mind of the countess; endeavour to take some refreshment, after which I must learn what has befallen you since I heard from you in Castile; your looks have prepared me for a detail of misery."

I returned, determined on exerting myself, to the room I had left.

"Excuse," I said, "the weak mind of a girl yet unused to bear misfortune; she shrinks at the recollection, and forgets to be thankful to that merciful Providence,

dence, who, preserving her from shipwreck, has restored her to her dear and valued friends."

After the repast I followed my father to his closet, and briefly informed him of what had befallen me in Spain—the death of sir William—my detention in Scotland—my obligations to the duke, and the fatal shipwreck; concealing, as was his express desire, his quality and real name under that of Monsieur Bidet, who was, I said, the guardian of lady St. Aubin, the bosom-friend of her father.

Ere I had finished my recital it was night. The earl embraced me, as the tears rolled down his cheeks—"You are, my child, too greatly agitated to talk longer on these matters; to-morrow I shall again discourse with you; meanwhile carefully conceal your marriage and adventures from every one; I will give you my reasons when next we meet."

Before I could reply, my sister Eleanor

nor entered from Warkworth. She had heard of my arrival, and, regardless of the depth of the roads, had hastened to me. Clasped to the gentle heart of lady Northumberland, I tried to forget I had ever been absent from Raby.

In the morning the earl again visited me.—"Why," I cried, "my father, conceal my marriage? Sure the daughter of the earl of Westmoreland was not degraded when she allied herself to the Beauchamps? Know, my lord, I will throw myself at the foot of the throne—I will implore the gracious Henry to protect the sad widow of him who at Agincourt shielded his sovereign—yes, he will assert the rights of my infant son—the father's merit shall protect his boy."

"Calm your agitation, my child, and patiently listen to me," replied my father.

"The

"The earl of Warwick died ere you left Castile; lord Richard was then absent. All the letters which passed between sir William and the earl—all the papers respecting the marriage of the fair Theresa and lord Henry, fell into the possession of his stepmother, lady Warwick. Haughty, fierce, and revengeful, I doubt she will not readily reveal her knowledge of the existence of what would authenticate claims to the prejudice of her son, who has been some time in possession of the titles and estates of his ancestors. Generous and unsuspecting, the earl believes the integrity of his mother as unquestionable as his own, and is by her firmly persuaded the child of lord Henry perished with his nurse. What evidence have we to the contrary? The late prior of Tinmouth, who would have warmly espoused the cause of the dead, died not long after sir William left

left the abbey of Fountaine; so also did Mabel, the nurse of lady Theresa, who, with the priest that married them, were all that were present at the ceremony, and he went upon a pilgrimage to Loretto soon after, and never returned. Even your own marriage rests upon your testimony and that of lady St. Aubin. Could Gilbert be found, he would be an useful evidence; I shall immediately send a messenger to Barcelona to search for him."

"Have you not," I anxiously said, "my lord, ever discoursed with earl Richard regarding his nephew?"

"Yes," returned my father, "I mentioned to him that sir William Fitzhugh, who was still alive, had informed me of his daughter's marriage with lord Henry Beauchamp, and that the son of this marriage was lately found by him, elegantly formed, possessed of every accomplishment and every virtue to adorn the noble race from whence he sprung. Whilst

I spoke," continued my father, "Warwick quivered with rage, and laying his hand on his sword, swore, with a tremendous oath, *that* should maintain his right.

'Thinkest thou,' he cried, with vehemence, 'Westmoreland, I believe the tales of that old dotard Fitzhugh? Crazed by his residence in the cave thou talkest of, he dreams of forcing some lowborn beggar upon me as my nephew, in hopes of depriving me, the true and only heir, of titles and lands descended to me through a long line of gallant ancestry. What! shall the sword of the earls of Warwick be wielded by an ignoble peasant?—Forbid it, Heaven! Let Fitzhugh produce evidence first of my unhappy brother's marriage—the birth of his child—then prove it escaped the fate of its nurse—which done, the person of that child must be identified from infancy to manhood. Ah, Ralph of Raby! I thought thee not so credulous. Did

not

not sir William, when he quitted Fountaine, acknowledge his hopes were at an end? When he produces my nephew, gladly will I own him; till then I am earl of Warwick, lord of Penrith, &c.; and trust me, Westmoreland, so shall I die. Shall this good sword, which has not yet failed to chastise the foes of the Beauchamps, rust in its scabbard at sight of the impostor?'

"Ah my child!" continued my father, "can your most sanguine hopes flatter you the earl will yield his claim to my arguments, which must be unsupported by the slightest evidence? Brave and powerful, the king leans with safety on the earl of Warwick's valour. Ah Cicely! could you hope the gracious Henry would offend one of his first nobles now, when the meanest vassal's help is courted? Would he now hazard war and desolation in the heart of England, endanger even your kindred house of

Lancaster, and raise a proud rebellion against himself—and for a child whose birth is not authenticated, and whose life is at best precarious?"

"Yet, my father, sir William vested his own estates in the hands of his nephew, lord Henry Fitzhugh; sure he will acknowledge my infant's right.—There remain too, my lord, buried beneath the floor of the cell in the forest of Teesdale, the wills of the earl of Warwick and sir William, with authentic testimonies of the marriage of lady Theresa and the birth of her child."

"Ah! would to God," rejoined the earl, "lord Fitzhugh still lived! had your claim been established there, it would have supported you with the Beauchamps. With lord Henry I conferred on the subject; rejoicing at his cousin's probable return, he accompanied me on a hunting-party; pursuing the game too near the banks of the Tees, his horse fell

with

with him from the top of a rock, many feet perpendicular, into the river; dashed to pieces by the fall, his generous soul left the frail abode of mortality; and with him end your hopes on the estates of Fitzhugh. His infant son has it not in his power, or rather it is not in the power of his guardians, to relinquish; unless indeed you are right in regard to the papers buried in the cave; I well know no documents exist which can throw any light upon those transactions, which seem involved in obscurity. To-morrow I shall go myself to search the cave of father Ambrose."

"I will accompany you, my lord," I cried; "again I will visit the place where first I saw the venerable sir William; there did my beloved Beauchamp first say he loved; there will I find the testimonies of his birth, and throwing myself with them at the feet of the king, bathed with my tears, ask him to acknowledge

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the rights of my son; sure he cannot, will not refuse Cicely, to whom he promised his influence with her friends, that she might give her hand where her heart was unalterably bestowed."

"Agitate not thus yourself, my child; Henry is just—is generous; but we must deal with caution, keeping secret your pretensions even from the countess (unless there are some hopes of succeeding), whose high spirit would disdain to relinquish what she would know was your right, and regardless of the event, would immediately involve her sovereign and country in desolating war."

The earl dreading the effect a refusal might have on me, suffered me to accompany him to the cave. Weak as I was, the undertaking was rash, it being the depth of winter, and our way lay amongst deep morasses, and through a forest I too well knew was almost impenetrable, if the journey was delayed till

the

the melting of the snow; at present a severe frost gave a degree of hardness which the utmost power of the sun failed to soften.

Jaques accompanied us, and a train of domestics. To the countess, a pilgrimage of piety, in consequence of a vow, was said to be the cause of my visit to the hermitage. The first night we slept at Eaglestone priory; so fatigued was I when we reached it, I could not proceed; yet, contrary to my father's wishes, I still resolved to prosecute my journey, which, by the light of the waning moon, we did the next morning. I was almost benumbed with cold when we reached a hovel in the forest, where we found the board spread with plenty. Refreshed with our attendants, and warmed by the fire, again we set forward.

The sun had just risen, and throwing his askaunty beams over the frozen scene, seemed to revive nature, that

drooped beneath the rigour of the season; the deer, leaving their coverts, were browsing on the moss which appeared at the roots of the aged trees.

Every step we advanced recalled some action of my lord. Here it was the noise of the cataract first dashed upon our ears, and my beloved Beauchamp bade me sustain myself to its edge. I hear it no longer—all is changed. Lost in thought, the reins dropped from my hand; the horse felt not the restraining arm, and stumbling recalled me to myself. Sighing, I resumed the bridle—we reached the spot where the ruffians, quarrelling, gave us an opportunity to escape.

The earl marked my agitation, and lifting me from horseback, placed me near a fire kindled by our servants. In vain was persuasion; I peremptorily insisted on visiting the cave, though the road which led to it was impassable for horses,

horses, deep with snow, in many places glazed with ice, and scarcely admitted any footing. I felt as if again in father Ambrose's cell—again I should behold him—again should I view my husband!

Accompanied by my father and Jaques, or rather supported by them, I traced the path through which my Beauchamp had led me—then the page of my brother, and unconscious of my love for him. The cataract, arrested in its course, looked a wall of pure crystal. We reached the cell—the door was open.

Matilda, I entered with a heart full of recollections painfully dear; I hoped to have indulged a kind of delicious sorrow which soothes whilst it wounds; I hoped to have poured out the anguish of my soul at the foot of that cross—that very cross where first I saw sir William—where my lover kneeling, swore his life should end for me; there too I had knelt, and solemnly vowed, unless united to

him, my life should be devoted to a convent.

Matilda! what a shock I received, as I saw, without regard to its sanctity, that cross overthrown, the earth dug up which formed the floor, and a large chest, which was evidently the one described by sir William, and we came in search of, forced open and empty.

"Oh! 'tis done!" I exclaimed; "unhappy child! thy inheritance is wrested from thee! Ah! (and I dropped on my knees) my adored Beauchamp! behold from the abodes of bliss thy sad, thy widowed wife! Sure thy spirit hovers here —for was it not here that thou first knewest what name to give the soft emotion which swelled at thy heart? Here didst thou declare that, restoring me to Raby, thou wouldst end a life thou couldst not endure! Ah Beauchamp! thou sawest me not restored to the towers of my fathers! Bereft of life in a strange land, thou

thou and happiness left me together.—Oh hear my prayer! may every——"

"Curse him not who robbed you of this happiness," said the faithful Jaques, "for I perceive your purpose;"—and shook his white locks as he knelt by me.

"Oh, no, no!" I continued, "I will not curse him, for his sake who lies entombed at the mouth of the Tyne—for the sake of lady St. Aubin, I will not curse him.

"Why rave I of curses? Did not the rash count D'Aranjeus curse his child, the fair donna Theresa? Oh! it descends—a father's curse—from generation to generation! Avert it—in mercy avert it, Heaven! from the infant who bears his name!"

I spied somewhat on the floor, and snatching it, thrust it into my bosom. Worn out by raving, I was conveyed from a place which seemed to unsettle

my brain, and, in a state which approached nearly to that I had been in during my voyage from Spain, was slowly conveyed back to Raby.

Here let me pause, Matilda. I am summoned to attend the court; when I return to Fotheringay I know not—oft shall I sigh for its peaceful shades; the gay scenes I must mix in ill suit your

CICELY.

WHY was I called, my Matilda, to assist at such ill-sorted nuptials? Long ere this have you heard of the marriage of Richard of Gloucester with Ann, coheiress of my nephew. Ah my gentle niece! how art thou marked for destruction!—'tis the union of the lamb and the fox.

Yes, Richard, from thy infancy thy froward

froward spirit has been the bane of thy unhappy mother's peace; thou wilt live to be a scourge to thy unhappy country; already have thy valour, thy specious arts, gained thee with the multitude a popularity thou wilt not fail to turn to thy own selfish ends.

Oh that these sad eyes, my beloved friend, were sealed in death!—oh that I may be laid in the silent tomb, ere my fears are verified—ere again I behold my native land stained, deeply stained, with the blood of her children!

But I will resume my story, and, by retracing times long past, endeavour to lull my dread of future evils—evils, I fear, even hanging over my devoted family.

After leaving the cave, the agitation I had sustained, together with fatigue and severe cold, threw me into a fever, in the delirium of which I raved of lord Beauchamp—of the duke of Orleans—

sometimes

sometimes fancying I beheld my child—then screaming with terror, saw it wrested from me, and my husband, bathed in blood, rushed ghastly before my sight.

My disorder approached a crisis—the night was expected to determine my fate. I slept calmly for several hours—at times they scarce thought I breathed. Awaking refreshed and perfectly easy, I drew back the curtain—behind it sat my sister Jane.

" Am I," said I, " still here, tied down to this abode of flesh? But I rest satisfied, for such is thy will, oh blessed Father! I will be calm—I will no longer give way to this unavailing sorrow."

Jane had been my constant attendant, the earl not suffering even my mother to enter my apartment, lest my incoherent speeches should inform her of what had been so carefully concealed. To Jane my father had acknowledged such

parts

parts of my story as he judged requisite, with his reasons for secresy.

Lady Northumberland had been under a necessity of quitting Raby at the beginning of my illness, but I was visited by the earl and countess. The news of my apparent restoration spreading through the castle diffused each face with joy.

When my mother left the apartment, after her first visit, Jane, clasping her arms round me, exclaimed—"Ah my sister! what! have I been the cause of your suffering? Alas! till the earl found it was no longer in his power to conceal it from the countess, unless he informed me, I was ignorant of your various adventures, and thought you had been in a convent, safe from the cares of the world. All the woes you have undergone—did they not originate from me?"

"Reproach not yourself, my beloved sister; let us not repine at the decrees of

an overruling Providence; too long have I murmured. Listen to the vision which last night calmed my mind.

"Methought I stood on the banks of the Tees above the cataract, whose waters foaming down the vast rock almost deafened me. 'Oh!' I cried, 'my Beauchamp! my beloved lord Beauchamp! not even death shall divide us!' I leaped from the rock, but, ere I reached the bottom, was caught by an invisible power.

"I no longer saw the impending rock I had precipitated myself from; the mazy forest vanished, and shady bowers and sunny glades opened to my view; the din of the waters no longer assailed my ears, but soft strains of music that died adown the breeze; a form resembling my lord appeared, yet touched with a kind of heavenly grace; he took my hand— I felt all my sorrows vanish, as he spoke in a voice which ravished my soul—

'Cease,'

'Cease,' he said, 'my Cicely, those repinings, useless, nay wicked. From the abodes of bliss is thy Beauchamp sent to comfort thee. Know thou art decreed (and irreversible are the decrees of Heaven) to live many years on the earth—with patience sustain the part allotted. The decrees of Providence are not more fixed than inscrutable. Embroil not the house of thy fathers with mine. Had I reached the shores of England, a death more painful, yet as sure, had overtaken me; remember too the duke of Orleans was but an instrument in the hands of Providence. Had I escaped, and returned to my native land, all the North would have been in tumult; for me the Nevilles, the Beauchamps, every noble ally to either family, would have armed their vassals—the throne of Henry must have tottered at the sound of our arms—the land would have been deluged with blood;—France, recovered from her wounds,

wounds, would have sent her hosts to the distracted scene, and England, wounded by her own sons, had fallen an easy victory.'

"I looked up, and sir William Fitzhugh approached me—'My child,' said he, 'the inheritance of your infant lies in Spain; bring him not to England—nor lands nor titles wait him there; the curse, the fatal curse of D'Aranjeus falls on English blood alone; heavy it falls when *on the plain of*——But that I am forbid to speak, I could unfold——Listen to the proposals by your father—reflect on the sin of disobedience; the packet you found in the cave, so long on earth my residence, preserve it with care, nor open it till you sit in the castle of the Beauchamps which overhangs the Tees, its owners changed, and the dun bull sitting triumphant on its battlements.'

'Oppose not,' said my lord, 'thy fate; a long

a long line of princes shall descend from thee—kings shall call thee mother; but the secrets of futurity must be unfolded only by degrees. Give not way to despair; with firmness sustain the part allotted thee to fill.'

"Again was the music heard, and the vision melted—no longer I saw Beauchamp or sir William—the groves and sunny lawns were fled, the rapid waters of the Tees, its rocky banks, its thickening forest—and Fancy resigned herself to Reason.

"From this moment, Jane, I shall endeavour to sustain the part allotted me, nor give way to despair—Beauchamp urges me. The vision said, my child's inheritance lies in Spain—ah! too sure it is not in England! Ah! what could be meant when sir William told me, '*Heavy falls the curse when on the plain——*' and stopped? Full well I know the fatal curse of D'Aranjeus has fallen heavy on the

the English posterity of donna Theresa. I was bid to listen to my father's proposals, nor, refusing, incur the sin of disobedience. Ah Jane! whatever are his commands, I will obey, however they may militate against every feeling."

From this period I recovered fast, and, with my recovery, that bloom of beauty which had caused all the persecution of the rash duke of Orleans.

The earl, as soon as I was able to leave my chamber, set out for France, where Henry then was at the head of his victorious army. Jane, having obtained her father's consent, went soon after for Barking, accompanied by the countess of Westmoreland, in order to commence her noviciate—so eager was she to quit a world which no longer had any charms for her.

Sitting one evening with my brothers George and Thomas, discoursing of many little circumstances which had happened

when

when they and my lord were boys (they believed he had perished in the storm on the shores of Cumberland, and oft lamented his fall), with a melancholy pleasure was I listening to tales of his generosity and noble spirit, when a loud knocking was heard at the gate. It was sir John Conyers, who from the army was charged with letters to me, into whose hands alone would he deliver them. Assured of their consequence by the importance of the bearer, I withdrew. The first I opened was from the gracious king himself, kindly condoling with me on my misfortunes; he assured me it would be impossible, for want of evidence, to establish by law my claims on the title and estates of Warwick, except by a stretch of power not warrantable in an English sovereign, who swears to govern his country by its laws.— "You," he continued, "my gentle coz, would not wish to embroil the house of Lancaster

Lancaster with its subjects, nor are you now to learn, my Cicely, how ardently Harry of Monmouth wishes your happiness; to procure which he has ere now sacrificed his own, and is still ready to do so. Do you wish it, you shall rank, and bear the title, as widow of lord D'Agincourt, to which I shall annex lands in France; but take not the name or arms of Beauchamp; it would bring misery on you—on all allied to you. In regard to the young count D'Aranjeus, I have explained myself to the earl. I do not forget you, my fair cousin; your friend lady St. Aubin is a widow—her lands own English sway; for your sake I have settled them on her, and on her infant child."

This was nearly the letter of the king. My father advised me in his letter to conceal my marriage entirely.—"In Castile," he said, "you were alone known to Katherine as Cicely Neville; the secret

cret rests but with the king, lady St. Aubin, Jane, and myself; the priest who performed the ceremony is dead. Avow not yourself the widow of your brother's page, for such you must by taking the offered title. If you reclaim your child, relinquishing the titles and immense possessions in Castile, its birth must be traced to a herdsman's son. How could I bear—how could the high spirit of the countess bear it?

"I have," continued my father, "again discoursed with the earl of Warwick—again has he challenged me to produce evidence the child of his brother escaped from the Eure—'I have,' says he, 'sufficient proof it did not.' Of what nature, Cicely, those proofs are, I know not; but on the veracity of Warwick I durst stake my life. Blinded indeed by the artifices of his mother, true he may be deceived. Gallant and munificent, he reigns in the hearts of his numerous

vassals,

vassals, who have unanimously sworn to spend the last drop of their blood in defending their lord's title against all impostors. I have promised the earl not to resume the subject, unless I could produce proof that what I asserted was right. How small, my child, is the chance of my doing this!

" Warwick asked what interest I had in the business?—my answer was, a regard to justice, and friendship for sir William Fitzhugh—these alone had prompted me.

' Ah!' replied he, ' Westmoreland, thou whose counsels, whose prudence, have oft restrained rebellion, oft given peace to the North, is thy wisdom so easily deceived? What thinkest thou? Is France to be conquered by the nobles of England turning their arms against each other? No, my lord; here is my hand; let us have done with this foolish contention; let us but strive who best

shall

shall serve his country—who best shall support the gallant Henry.'

"Listen, my child," continued my father, "to these arguments."

Ah Matilda! what had I to oppose to them? True, love for the memory of my lord, and affection for my child, strongly urged me to avow myself the widow even of my brother's page. Madness I found it would be, without any proof, to assert my right to the title of Warwick. But to what end, unless I could have my child with me, was I to do this? Taking him from Castile, his possessions there, I knew, would be forfeited; but, for his sake, I resolved to quit country and friends; I would know none as home but Castile; there would I watch over my child, my poor loved orphan; and to this effect I wrote to my father.

"Rely," said he, in answer to me, "Cicely, on my prudence; believe I have many and various reasons why you

must not go to Castile at present, but cannot explain them. Remember, if you go, you forfeit for ever a parent's blessing. Alas, my child! I may be tempted to curse the day which gave you birth."

My resolution to obey now became as strong as love for my child, and I gave up, in obedience to the earl's commands, all thoughts of visiting Spain.

Gilbert, in spite of every inquiry, could not be found. My father had repeatedly assured me I must be mistaken in regard to the duke of Orleans—it could not be. True, I had not seen his face; but his voice, his figure—who else could it be? No, I was not deceived—he was the murderer of my husband.

The earl now absent, I sent the faithful Jaques as a spy to where the duke was confined, in order that he might introduce himself to him, and learn if he was suffered to be in Spain, when he ought, as a prisoner of so much consequence,

quence, to have been closely confined. Representing the affair to Henry in a formal way, I hoped at least he would be so restrained that I might enjoy some small degree of revenge for what I had suffered.

The year of probation expired, and the whole family of Neville were assembled to see Jane take the vows. The scene was solemnly striking; but you have been present, Matilda, when a nun was received into the holy sisterhood, so it need not be described to you.

How mild, how cheerful, was the deportment of this noble-minded girl!

"To enter," said she to me, with a steadiness of voice, "my Cicely, the abode which the blessed St. Cuthbert has oft in dreams and visions commanded me to seek, is consolation indeed—here shall my weary soul have rest. Be firm, my sister, in your duty; reflect on the price my disobedience has cost; think

of the curse of D'Aranjeus; in Castile is his descendant safe; ah! let him not quit it for England!—there unknown dangers wait his infant years."

This speech, pronounced with a dignified air, so natural to her, seemed to me at the time prophetic.

As I clasped the charming nun to my heart, and faintly pronounced adieu, my whole frame seemed to shudder.

When Jane gracefully knelt, and took the last, the solemn vow, all eyes were fixed upon her; those of the countess were dimmed with tears. Now the whole choir of nuns, in full concert, made the sacred roof resound to the harmony of their voices. I was seated, according to my age, beneath the earl and countess—I cast my eyes upon them. Ah Matilda! almost every descendant of the earl was present—all attentive to the scene before them—all softened by the hymn of praise, whose swelling notes mounted

mounted like incense through the holy edifice. The service over, the world was closed for ever from her who seemed born only to adorn it.

With an additional heaviness at my heart, I returned with my parents to Raby. The earl now acquainted me Katherine, the queen regent of Castile, had died soon after I quitted Spain, and don Juan, her son, was declared of an age to govern. This my father had declined informing me of, till he could also say that my son was protected equally as he had been by donna Katherine; this I doubted, as the queen was truly attached to the young count, and merely as a descendant of the house of Lancaster, to which she was so partial, she would have shielded him from all danger.

Jaques had been absent some time, yet no news had arrived of him; as for Gilbert, we conjectured he must have

 been

been killed by robbers, as he had been seen a little distance from Barcelona, after which no traces could be found of him.

My father was again summoned to attend the king, and my mother accompanied him to the South, where she meant to stay some time. I begged and obtained permission to remain at Raby. My brother Henry was left as my guard, although unwillingly, as he thought himself defrauded of the laurels which his brothers were gathering in France, and longed for an opportunity of proving himself not unworthy of the heroic name he bore.

The earl had allowed me to follow my taste in the erection of a kind of monument (at least such I deemed it) to the memory of my lord, where I spent much of my time. The building was plain and simple, calculated to inspire in the gayest mind a kind o[illegible]ive sadness,

and,

and, stealing the thoughts from earth, fix them beyond the grave. From the front of this place the prospect was beautiful, overlooking a vast tract of country. Here oft I sat, meditating on my sad fate; here had I collected whatever once belonged to lord Beauchamp; sacred from all intrusion, here did I weep over my sorrows.

It was now the month of harvest, and plenty smiled over the land, when a courier arrived, bringing intelligence that a band of Scots had entered England by the middle marches, most of them the fierce Galwegians; they desolated the country with fire and sword, bending their course to Durham.

The ardent spirit of lord Henry took fire, and snatching his sword and buckler, he swore to lead every remaining vassal of the house of Neville against the perfidious Scots.

The sun, [illegible]wing morning, when

it rose on the dun bull, the ensign of the Nevilles, saw my brother, at the head of his troop, some miles on their march to the North.

The following evening, I retired early to my apartment, and dismissed my damsel; telling her I should not again require her attendance. Tempted by the beauty of the setting sun, unknown to any one, I left the castle, and visited the monument of my lord. I surveyed the fields ready for the sickle, and sinking under the load of plenty, or cut down and left exposed to the weather.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "thou desolating power! why thus settest thou men to destroy each other? The blessings, great Author of nature! which thou hast poured so plentifully out upon us, are left to the change of season, to be slowly gathered by the aged and feeble hinds, whilst the youthful swain has beaten his sickle into a sword. The [illegible] joy, which

a few

a few nights ago saluted my ears, is no more; the rocks and groves resound to the cheerful notes of the fife, and the step of the light-hearted dancer was heard—all is now mute and sad. Ah! when shall this strange enmity cease?—when shall it be that the savage borderers will desist from mutual animosity?"

I bent my sight to the South; every part of the horizon was clear and unclouded, except there a small black cloud seemed gathering into a storm. I returned into the cell to perform those devotions that were never omitted when I visited it; for there I had brought the cross from the hermitage of sir William, at whose foot lord Beauchamp had sworn his life should be ended for me. A violent peal of thunder shook the building to its foundation.

I arose, and looking out of the door, beheld, from the black cloud which now overspread [illegible]hole sky, successive

flashes of fire emitted; the thunder echoed through the grove, and the rain descended in torrents; the night closed thick around, yet I knew no one would search for me, as none of the domestics had seen me go out; I attempted therefore to go alone to the castle, but, terrified by the war of the contending elements, returned, resolving rather to stay there till morning than encounter the storm.

I had with me a dog, given by the young king of Castile to lord Beauchamp. During my sad voyage from Spain it had been my companion, nor did even lady Douglas deprive me of it. Locked in my arms was the faithful creature when I was shipwrecked at Tinmouth. Pressing it to my bosom, I resigned myself to my fate, picturing a band of ruffian Scots ready to seize me —no Beauchamp now to guard. I stood but a moment at the [illegible] before the

lightning

lightning struck me to the ground.—Long I lay motionless, but, recovering a little, still heard the thunder, but less distinct. Wrapping my garments over me, I thought I would at least not see what fate awaited me. The thunder at length ceased; the beams of the moon irradiated the cell; cautiously I rose again to the window; the horizon was clear, and bespangled with thousands of stars, and the moon calmly sailing through the heavens in full and unclouded majesty. The bell from the castle announced it midnight.

I began to deliberate what to do. Tho' now the night was fine, yet might not some lurking villain make me his prey? My brother might not meet the Scots—already might they be at the gates of Raby. Wistfully beholding those towers which I had so foolishly quitted, my fears were augmented, as I beheld a tall and stately figure pass hastily along a

path which was at a little distance from me; my heart beat with quickness; the step was that of no vulgar kind. I doubted my fears were realized, and that this was some Scottish chieftain; yet no—he would not be unattended—fire and sword must mark his footsteps. The moon shone full upon him—his carriage seemed fearless and undaunted. I remained as it were rivetted to the spot. Now he was hid from me by the path winding amongst the trees, yet still I could distinguish his firm step. A dark cloud crossed the orb of the moon—again it burst forth—the same manly form stood at the ditch of the castle, which, with a degree of strength and agility I could not have supposed possible, he leaped, and through a gate I scarce ever saw opened, passed into the castle.

A person appeared who advanced also to the moat, leading two horses. Wonder, fear, and almost a distrust of my

senses, kept me with my eyes fixed on the postern-gate; again it opened, and he I had beheld pass through returned, and again leaping the ditch, mounted one of the horses which stood by it, then with incredible swiftness vanished from my view. I was lost in conjecture. At length the morning broke in ruddy tints, and the rising sun seemed smiling through tears.

I set out on my return to the castle; just as I reached it, the bridge was let down, and all the domestics who were left to guard it were crossing; their countenance, at sight of me, suddenly changed from the dread and anxiety marked on them to pleasure. My damsel missing me, every apartment of the castle had been vainly searched, and they were now going to seek me in the park.

Ordering my women to watch by me, I went to bed. A crowd of frightful images haunted my broken slumbers.

When

When I arose, summoning the domestics, I inquired concerning what I had seen; all seemed perfectly unconscious —all declared they had heard no noise. I proceeded to the postern-gate; it did not appear as if it had been lately opened, but I gave orders it should be better secured; every corner of the castle was searched, yet no traces could be seen of any person having been there.

After ordering as strong a guard to watch the walls as the number of the domestics would allow, I retired to my apartment, and, seated by a window which had an indistinct view of lord Beauchamp's cell, I began to reflect on all that had passed. Sure, thought I, this must have been the illusion of my senses! and measuring, as it were, the ditch with my eye, sure it must! Who could have leaped such a width?—it was not possible. Was I certainly awake?

Wearied with conjecture, I ordered my

my women to attend, and spent the night anxious and sleepless.

Afraid to venture to my cell, I employed the following day in again searching the castle. The servants assured me of the utter impossibility of any person leaping the moat; and seeing the gates locked, I endeavoured to quiet my fears, and turn my thoughts another way, by taking up a Latin treatise on the immortality of the soul, which the earl, my father, had given me at his last return from France. My women were asleep beside me, and I had read some time, when the castle-bell announcing a late hour, I closed the book, and softly ejaculated—"Yes, Beauchamp! we shall meet again in the world of spirits! there shalt thou recognise thy tardy Cicely, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage—yes, there shall we meet, purged from the ills of mortality —there,

—there, my loved lord, no cruel Orleans shall separate us!"

I heard a deep sigh at the foot of the room—I looked up. With his back against the tapestry, and his head resting on his arm, which was laid on the cabinet—with his eyes fixed on me, was the duke of Orleans!

Oh Matilda! it was indeed he—no illusion—but the bloody murderer of my peace.

Uttering a loud scream, I started from my seat, then fell lifeless; as I recovered, I felt bursting with horror and indignation, as I saw him who had deprived my husband of life, busied in restoring mine. I burst from him, and covering my eyes, cried, in an agony of grief and rage—"Begone, I conjure you, begone; as I look on you, my brain turns to madness."

"Wretched Orleans!" he exclaimed, "art thou indeed so hated?"

"Yes,"

"Yes," I replied, "I hate thee even with more ardour than I loved lord Beauchamp."

"Yet hear me, Cicely," interrupting me with quickness, "I conjure you to hear me."

I screamed aloud for help.

"In vain is all this agitation; exhaust not thus your spirits; the damsels have had a drug given them, of power sufficient to lull a Cerberus to sleep."

Regardless of the duke's admonitions, I still called for assistance.

"Again I assure you," said he, "this is needless; you are now, Cicely, perfectly in my power."

"So was I in the castle of Bidet," I replied with spirit; "there did Providence deliver me out of your hands, so do I trust he will again."

"Those hopes," he rejoined, "are in vain; here is no one to deliver you."

"What! thou stain to thy race!" I cried,

cried, "wouldst thou brave—insult me beneath the roof of my father?"

"Cease, cease, Cicely, and listen to me."

"Never, never," I replied; "I will not listen to thee; 'tis treason to my loved lord to breathe the same air—'tis sacrilege; his murdered spirit—yes, the pure spirit of my husband, from his abode of bliss, looks down on me with reproach; he bids——"

The prince laid his hand on my mouth. "Rave no longer," he exclaimed, "thou fair arbitress of my fate! for, by Heaven! you shall be mine on any terms; too late may you repent this scorn."

I took my hands from before my eyes—I cast them on the duke—I was terrified into silence—I felt myself in his power—his looks too plainly told me what I had to dread—he threw himself at my feet.

"Orleans," he said, "kneels—listen then,

then, Cicely, to what he urges—for what is it you thus hate? Did, in Bidet, where I reigned sole master, my ardent passion ever outstep the bounds you prescribed? ever infringe on the delicacy of your situation?—Answer me quick."

"True, I own it, my lord."

"Did I not," he continued, "make proposals to you befitting a princess of England?"

"Were not, Orleans, those proposals insults? were you not then married? and did I not reject them?"

"Yes, Cicely, true, you rejected; yet as you tied round me, at parting, the scarf I was so proud of, had I then not cause to hope? Ah Cicely! it led to my destruction; with it I nourished a passion which has made me brave danger in various shapes—which has driven me almost—nay, will drive me to madness. Cruel girl! yet you fled from me, from Bidet, with a base-born hind!"

"Good

"Good Heavens! do I live;" I cried, "to hear lord Beauchamp called base-born? Mighty God! do I survive, yet view his murderer? Ah! that my eyes had power to strike thee dead!"

The duke rose—"True is it," he exclaimed, "I killed him; did not his presumption merit a less-glorious death?—But were he, as you call him, an English baron, did it befit him to rival a prince of France, whose lilies must, however depressed, still rise triumphant? Know, Cicely, I glory in the deed; the fates decree you mine, and mine alone."

He threw his arms round me—I broke violently from the grasp.

"Then hear me," he said, "fair Neville—hear me speak—do you listen!"

I was terrified by his manner.—"I do listen, Orleans," I replied.

"I repeat, then," he said, "my offer—will you consent to be duchess of Orleans? I can now make you so."

Never—

"Never—hear me solemnly swear I never will be your wife—never shall Cicely be the duchess of Orleans. What! shall the wretched widow of lord Beauchamp wed his murderer?—join her hand to that yet reeking with her husband's blood? Oh distraction! rather let a grave, deep as the foundations of the earth, be dug to hide her from the view of him whose sword robbed her of happiness."

"Retract," said the duke, hastily, "those rash resolves. Well I know your sex is fickle and changeable, yet your affections ever wait on the brave and the gallant, and spurn at those who stoop and vainly sue for love. Dally then no longer with a passion not to be controlled. Yes, Cicely, you force me to say you do but dissemble when you tell me that you hate. For your sake reflect to what dangers do I expose myself—think already what has Orleans done

done for you. Do you count it nothing to defy Louis, the dauphin?—to threaten that for you I would have turned my arms against France? But why should I delay?—my attendants wait."

So saying, he lifted me in his arms, whilst, amazed and terrified, I scarce attempted to resist.

We descended a private staircase which led to the foot of one of the towers; the duke lifting a trap-door, we entered a passage which I knew led to the outer side of the moat, being dug beneath it; beyond this passage we found a person who held two horses, on one of which I was mounted before the duke. We proceeded till we came to the cell of lord Beauchamp; at this spot I was near lifeless; but the sight of it dashed a sudden horror into my soul, invigorated my spirit, and I threw myself from him.

"Cruel Orleans!" I cried, "here shall the wretched Cicely die—no force shall

drag

drag me hence alive! Quick, unsheath that sword, stained with blood infinitely dearer to me than what runs in giddy tides round this sad heart; haste, Orleans, set me free from this load of life."

The duke was at my side; pushing with all his strength at the door, the feeble bars gave way; he carried me in; the taper which burned on the table before my patron saint diffused a dim shade of light. The prince started as he viewed the solemn apparatus of woe; then recovering himself, cried, as he shut the door—"Here are we safe; this seems no place for the living; no longer shall I beg and sue, haughty dame."

He clasped me to his bosom with an air which bordered on frenzy. I felt as if inspired with new strength, and snatching his dagger, burst from him, and ran to the other side of the cell; I raised my arm—the point of the dagger was at my bosom—it was snatched from me—I turned—

turned—the weapon dropped from my grasp—when I beheld, as if sent from heaven to aid me, Jaques!

"Oh, shield me!" I cried, throwing my arms round him, "thou faithful follower of thy master's fortune!"

"Be comforted, lady; have I not sworn my life should be ended in your service?"

The duke seized the dagger, and aimed a blow at Jaques—"Take," he cried, "saucy knave, the reward of thy presumption."

I threw myself before him—"Strike," said I, "here, but reverence those hoary locks."

"Know you not, my lord," exclaimed my venerable preserver, "Jaques, whom, when a little boy, you loved—whom your father, the noble prince of Orleans, loved? Behold me—look on me; sent as it were from the dead, I am the messenger to bring thee tidings thou couldst not dream of—who warns thee from persecuting

secuting her thy father lost his life to guard. Prepare thyself for a tale most wonderful, which, as I relate, must enforce thy attention. You recollect, my lord, this writing?"

"Yes," said the duke, taking the letter; "'tis that of my father."

"Read then, my lord."

Whilst perusing it, the countenance of the prince underwent various changes.

"Speak!" he cried, "how is this? Art thou indeed sent from the dead to warn me? My father bids me cease to persecute lady Cicely, and to be reconciled to the house of Burgundy."

The duke stopped—he trembled.

"Speak!" he continued—"torture me not with suspense; my father died long before I knew lady Cicely; how could he know of his assassination? how of my wished revenge on the duke of Burgundy?"

"Know then, my lord," said Jaques,

" the duke, long surviving his assassination, lost his life on the shores of England. Yes, my gracious master swore to defend her you so strangely persecute; for his sake will I spend the last drop of my blood for the lady Cicely; strike then at once this aged bosom, whose heart, when it ceases to beat, then only will forget its duty to the house of Orleans. Lady Cicely is encompassed by a band of friends, who attend to convey her back to the castle of her father.

" Yet you strike not, my lord. I conjure you, lady, on my knees, for his sake who rescued you from the jaws of death deliver not his son to the justice this attempt deserves; oh, suffer him to go unmolested!"

" Guide me," I faintly cried, " my friend. Ah! why is the son of the duke of Orleans my Beauchamp's murderer? How, how shall I separate the idea?—Yet bear him to Raby as the son of my preserver,

preserver, as Monsieur Bidet; there shall he be safe, though the haughty persecutor of the daughter of Westmoreland—though the murderer of lord Beauchamp."

The door opened; some well-known faces appeared, who supported me to Raby, whilst the duke followed, on whose strongly-marked countenance sat a mixture of wonder, shame, and grief. We entered the castle; still were my damsels buried in sleep; I threw myself on my couch, and rested till morning.

From Jaques I begged to know what he had learnt concerning the duke. After many searches, and in various disguises visiting numberless castles, he at length had found him at a house of lady Warwick in Worcester, from whence he traced him to the neighbourhood of Barnard Castle; at nightfall yesterday he had seen him set out, attended by a single person on horseback; their course

appeared bent for Raby. Following, he had raised, as he went, the vassals who yet remained at home; with them he proceeded till he came to the castle, when he saw again the duke and his attendant on horseback. As he advanced, he perceived a woman mounted before the duke, nor doubted it was me; he had seen us enter the cell, and as he approached, the person who held the horses gallopped off, nor had it been in the power of those who accompanied Jaques to overtake him. He also informed me of his having told my domestics that Monsieur Bidet had assisted in my rescue, and that the villain who had made the attempt had escaped.

"The letter," he continued, "which I gave the duke was written by my gracious master whilst in Scotland, in case I should survive and see his son, whom I have briefly informed of all I know regarding the duke, sir William Fitzhugh, lord

lord Beauchamp, and you, my dear mistress.

"Touched with a sincere though late repentance, he deeply deplores his crimes, and begs you will grant this one, this last request—allow him at your feet to inform you how he has been deceived—how led to commit crimes for which he dare not ask your forgiveness—by what artifice he has been made to heap misery on his head and yours. Oh lady! for his father's sake grant this request."

"Yes, Jaques," replied I, "for his sake he is safe—let him fly—yes, instantly fly, lest I change my resolves, lest vengeance overtake him. Never will I behold him; tell him he is my only foe—my deadly enemy—the bane of all my hopes. Go, Jaques, go—tell him thus—and thus says Cicely, the widowed wife of lord Beauchamp."

Soon the duke's ambassador returned. —"Pardon, oh pardon! lady," he said,

" this intrusion; but the duke bids me say he has somewhat to impart which is of consequence to you to be informed of."

" Again I tell you," said I, with a haughty tone of impatience, " I will not, cannot see him; let seas and mountains —let the whole earth divide us."

I left the hall where I was, and retired, greatly agitated, to my apartment, giving orders that no message nor letter was to be brought me. I resolved in the evening to mount the turret of one of the towers, in hopes to discover some messenger from my brother Henry, for whose return I began to be very anxious. I opened my door—I started—Orleans was leaning against the wall; I would have closed the door and retreated, but he knelt to prevent me.

" Hear me! oh hear, thou injured woman! Alas, Cicely! you know not what you do."

" No,

"No, Orleans, I will not hear you; dare you still insult me? how long shall you do it with impunity?"

"Alas! then you will not listen to me? I ask but to be heard—I ask not your forgiveness. Shall I die, and you believe me even more guilty than I am? Oh Cicely! my soul revolts, it sickens at your scorn—it will not, cannot bear your hatred long."

"What sayest thou? have I not cause to hate? I will not listen to thee longer. Fly, instantly fly—I bid thee."

"In this I will not, cannot obey—I will not, cannot quit Raby till you hear me."

The duke was rising, and I fled into another apartment, whence I heard Jaques long in vain persuading him to retire.

Think you, Matilda, this night was spent in sleep—in easy and peaceful dreams? Ah! no, no; it was passed in agitation, in heartfelt uneasiness. As it

drew towards morning, I went into an adjoining apartment, whose window looked into the inner court of the castle; a light at an opposite window startled me—it showed me the duke seated at a table writing; now he rose, and traversed the room with hasty steps; the morning dawned—I saw him open his casement—he seemed to sigh. Afraid he might see me, I returned to my chamber, and soon heard a foot beneath my window; it was the prince—his looks pale and disordered, his hair loose and dishevelled—with an unequal pace he traversed a few minutes backwards and forwards, then set off at full speed the road he had taken the preceding night—again I saw him stop, but quickly lost sight of him amidst the trees.

Though Jaques repeatedly begged for admission during the day, I refused; yet a kind of disquiet took possession of me; sure I was wrong—perhaps what the duke

duke had to say might nearly concern me—was I not too obstinate? yet how was it possible I could see him?

The setting sun gilded each turret of Raby, and threw its radiance over hill and dale. I will go, thought I, as I walked hastily to the door of my apartment, to the monument of my lord; there will I endeavour to collect my thoughts. I had ordered, before this, no one to enter my presence, and unlocking the private gate, out of which I generally went, took my way, with my eyes bent upon the ground; looking up, I spied the duke thrown on a bench—I screamed, and would have retreated, but he threw himself before me.

"Wretch," said he, "that I am! you hate, you despise the unhappy Orleans, whose life is become insupportable to himself! Deliver me (I ask no other boon) from this load of misery—avenge at once lord Beauchamp—glut your ha-

tred with my blood—already at my heart sits a dagger more terrible than the wound this can inflict." Presenting me with his sword, and baring, as he knelt, his bosom—" Strike, Cicely—defer it not."

" Leave, oh leave me!" I faintly cried, as I sunk on the seat he had risen from; " for the sake of your father, that noble prince, I fain would not curse thee."

" Oh! for his sake, then, condescend to hear me!"

" Quit me," I cried; " depart whilst yet in your power—my brother will return; ah! what will be the issue of this I know not!"

I arose—throwing himself at my feet, he exclaimed, in an agony of despair— " Let all your race rise against me—let Harry of Monmouth again meet me face to face—I flinch not; for Cieely I dare all, nor shall aught drive me from Raby till she hears me."

" Why

"Why thus haunt, thus persecute me?" I said, bursting into tears; "again shall I never know happiness? Alas! it died at Barcelona, cruel, cruel Orleans! with my husband."

The duke hastily rose—"Then, Cicely, you refuse me this last satisfaction—refuse to hear what is of consequence sufficient to have made you listen with attention even to me; but be it so—no more shall Orleans intrude on you."

With hurried steps he took the road which led to the castle, leaving me almost in a state of annihilation; I dried the tears which flowed down my cheeks.

The duke, thought I, is gone to Raby in order to leave it to-night. Returning there, I will send to him—I will, constraining myself, hear what he has to say; perhaps it may concern the life of my father. Oh! I am culpable, very culpable indeed! Sure my brother will return to-night—I will then set about this

painful task without delay. Rising, I walked a few paces, scarcely conscious which way I went; but, overcome by my agitation, I found myself unable to proceed. I had wandered out of the path, and threw my wearied body on a seat which stood beneath the shade of a yew-tree; there, incapable of moving, in a state which seemed almost a suspension of existence, did I see the last beauties of the sun gleam over the grass; then nought remained of its radiance but the golden cloud behind, under which it had dropped into the ocean.

I must indeed go, I thought, and made an effort to rise; my dog barked—I looked round, but saw nothing. "Go," said I, "you little fool! why thus needlessly alarm me?" Again he barked—it was no needless alarm—the duke of Orleans appeared, his dress disordered, and his countenance wearing a kind of fran-

tic

tic air bordering on desperation; I scream-ed with terror.

"'Tis true indeed, Cicely," he exclaimed with quickness, "I know you hate me, nor want I this fresh proof to assure me of it. Long since did you refuse," said he, sighing, "to share the then-brilliant fortunes of the powerful duke of Orleans; now a prisoner, I wonder not you despise him—his sun of glory is set for ever; alike unfortunate in all his undertakings, in the grave alone shall he rest in quiet; alike shall the clay of England be heaped on father and son—alike shall their lives be ended for you. I have brought," said he, presenting me with a bundle of papers from beneath his vest, "all I could bequeath—enjoy it undivided with him you hate—'tis all the atonement left him to make. There will you see what, had you allowed, I would myself have revealed to you. Yet it remains to seal my vera-city—

city—yet it remains to evince the love you so long have scorned—to show you I cannot live beneath your hatred—to show you, Cicely, what such a soul is capable of when driven, as I am, to despair—thus, thus, my Cicely, I do it!"

Plunging, as he spoke, a dagger into his bosom, he sunk at my feet.

I screamed aloud, then fell into a convulsive kind of fit, and in this state lay some time, till, recovering a little, I heard the hallooing of many people, who, I found, sought me. Each winding, each building, caught the sound, and echoed back my name. I raised myself on the body of the duke, and faintly, but, alas! too faintly, cried—"Here is Cicely whom you seek!"

I lost the sound of the steps—the voices died on the breeze. The night had closed over us—it was dark, very dark—a thick mist, involving earth and sky,

sky, had fallen heavy on me—my garments were drenched in rain and blood.

A deep, a dying groan from the duke convinced me he still lived. I took his head, and laid it on my knee, and in this posture supported him who had caused me so much misery—who, for my sake, had thus madly sacrificed himself, till I heard the alarm-bell sound at Raby.

The wood soon shone with the light of torches—one seemed to approach—I would have spoken, but speech was denied me. The light passed behind the yew-tree; emerging again, the silver locks of Jaques reflected its grateful beams; he was praying, as he went, for my safety. I half arose, then fell extended over the body of the prince, who yet had life sufficient to give utterance to a heavy groan, which reached the ears of the faithful servant of his house; returning, he viewed with horror all that remained of Orleans.

"Alas!" exclaimed he, "has that rash, that headstrong youth, at length depriv-ed the best, the loveliest lady in the world of life—himself too? Oh, misery, misery!" he continued, as he bent over us, "that my old age should be prolong-ed to view this!"

He saw I still breathed; he raised and poured some cordial down my throat—I began to recover. Pointing to the duke, he asked who had done the fatal deed?

"Himself," I replied, in a fit of frantic despair; "yet he still lives—get assist-ance—bear him to Raby. Oh! save him, gracious Heavens! spare him this added sin! let him not be his own executioner!"

I knelt by him; his pallid looks seem-ed to say all assistance was vain, and that the clay of England must indeed be thrown alike on father and son.

He lifted his eyes, and threw them with a dying look upon me, then again

closed

closed them, whilst his cold clammy hand pressed mine with a convulsive start.

Warned by the signals from the castle, a number of people approached, to whom Jaques called.

"Here," said I, "behold, ye faithful vassals, lady Cecily; in defending her, Monsieur Bidet has received a fatal wound; bear him to Raby, but bear him with caution."

It was dawn of day when I arrived at Raby, at whose gates I stood till the duke passed through. His manly form lay stretched on a kind of bier; from his side trickled the blood, which had dyed his garments of a sanguine hue; the torches cast a sickly light as they yielded to the approach of day, yet showed the features of the prince changed to the pale and livid hue of death; his long hair, dishevelled, half-concealed his face, and his graceful limbs lay without motion.

He

He was attended to his chamber by Jaques, who perfectly understood surgery.

I spent some hours in a state of suspense; at length Jaques appeared—"The wound," said he, "is deep and dangerous, yet it has not touched the vital parts; the season is favourable—the duke is young—we will not despair; the bleeding is staunched, but life seems slowly to revisit his frame. Try, my dear lady, to compose yourself; endeavour to get some rest, after which I will visit you, and consult what steps must be taken against lord Henry's return from the borders."

With languid steps I entered my chamber; my eyes caught the mirror, and I started with terror; my hair, dishevelled and wet with dew, hung lank over my shoulders; my countenance was pale and distained with blood, and my garments were rent in divers places.

As

As I unfastened my girdle, I found stuck into it the large bundle of papers the duke had given me; I threw them on the table—"Lay there," said I, "ye testimonies of his penitence, of his"—I was going to add—love; but sighing, began to undress; yet, thought I, this must be opened—it contains what the prince was so anxious to reveal—what I so obstinately refused to hear.

Taking up the packet, I shuddered on looking at the seal; turning to the superscription, a tear, I saw, had blotted it; yes, the haughty duke had wept; it was sprinkled too with his blood—my name was covered with it.

Oh! thought I, this is indeed ominous! and I shook with horror as the packet fell from my hand. I called my women, whom before I had dismissed, and bade them watch in my apartment.

When I arose, Jaques was sent for.—"The duke," he said, "was scarcely able to

to articulate a single word through extreme weakness, yet seemed sensible, and had taken some trifling nourishment. Relying on his skill and fidelity, I begged he would take the entire charge of him.

The following morning, Jaques informed me that his patient had in a low voice inquired for me, and with difficulty could be persuaded I was well.

I began to fear much for the safety of my brother and his little troop, which had been absent now several days, and spent some time in watching the road. A courier arrived the following day, which bade me expect lord Henry's return. This, as I reflected on the situation of the prince, filled me with fresh uneasiness; to Jaques I imparted my fears.

"Alas!" I cried, "should it be known that the duke is at Raby with me, will not the king, the generous, the noble Henry, suspect me of deceiving him?

Ah!

Ah! should he die, what new misery must await me, wretch that I am!—What! both father and son to die for thee? Shall I try to conceal his real quality by a mean interment? No, it shall not be, Jaques, that two dukes—two princes—for me should be deprived of obsequies suited to their high rank.

"Will not the French loudly demand what has become of their gallant prince? Then shall it be known I was the fatal cause of his death. Whither, ah! whither shall I fly?—no longer in Castile rules my cousin Katherine."

It was, Jaques told me, only by using my name that the duke could be brought to suffer life, having repeatedly torn the dressings from the wound, and that he feared each moment to be the last—to such weakness had the loss of blood reduced him.

In vain did this faithful creature endeavour to console me, in vain point out the

the necessity of composing myself ere my brother's return. Restless and uneasy, I wandered from one apartment to another without knowing which way I went. Passing through the gates of the castle, I mounted an eminence which looked to the North, but no banner of the Nevilles met my sight—I returned to my chamber—"Ah!" said I, "he shall die—he has to go to the grave with all his crimes unatoned for."

I took the key of my cabinet, and, with a trembling hand unlocking it, found the packet which I had deposited there. "This then," said I, "was the atonement thou wouldst make; true, it was all thou couldst; yet didst thou think that the rich domains of the house of Orleans could compensate for him thou slewest, and calm the miseries of his wretched widow? Ah, no! blood for blood, it is written, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

I turned

I turned over the packet—the sanguine drop again met my view; I cast my eyes to heaven, as if supplicating mercy; clasping my hands, the paper dropped from them as I ejaculated—"Yes, that law is fulfilled—the blood of Orleans has been shed at the feet of Cicely. What! could it be love that has caused this complicated misery? Ah! no, no; it cannot be love!"

I paused—"No," I resumed, "love is gentle—it seeks but the happiness of its object. Was not my beloved Beauchamp gentle as the mild gales of spring, when breathing over the new-opened blossoms? was not his courage exerted but to protect?—Oh no! the duke loves me not—he seeks but his own gratification, regardless whom he wounds by his rashness."

Again I paused, and sighing took up the letter.

"The duke," said I, turning to break the

the seal, "never knew control; for me has he suffered much—for me has he plunged into crimes he would not have otherwise encountered. Why did I not hear him? Ah! why must his blood rest upon me?"

I broke the seal, but at that moment was informed my brother was approaching. At the outer gate I met him; the horns seemed to sound gaily, and the dun bull fluttered on the banners, I thought, triumphant; yet I marked a pensive sadness on the countenance of lord Henry which agreed not with those tokens of conquest. Ordering his attendants to be all entertained in the large hall, he accompanied me into the castle, when he proceeded to inform me he had crossed the Tyne near Hexham, expecting every step they took was to bring them near the ravagers. Marching till midnight, they were advanced a considerable way into the wilds of Northumberland,

umberland, when setting a watch, they encamped for the remainder of the night. The few inhabitants had fled at their approach; and the news that a band of Scots, after scouring the western, were returning by the eastern borders, reached sir John Neville, then warden of the western, who happened to be at the castle of Wark; hastily gathering what force was at hand, he went out to meet them; each party advanced with braced bows, and met.

But how great was the warden's surprise when he saw and embraced the youthful lord Henry, who with his troop proceeded to Wark, in order to refresh themselves after their hasty march! The ardent Henry learnt he was deceived—all was peace on the borders; though he had caused an alarm, it was the only one for some months they had known.

The following day, to entertain him, was fixed for a hunting-match; they met with

with a party of Scots—neither side would yield; lord Henry was inflamed with rage at his needless journey, and was the first to give a blow; overpowered by numbers, he was taken by those Scots he had so ardently longed to signalize himself against.

How was he then mortified, after giving proofs of ineffectual valour, to find himself a prisoner—to find himself in this situation to the sworn foe of his name—to the fierce lady Douglas! She ordered him to a dungeon which admitted not a ray of light.

Fatigued with his hunting and quick march to the borders, he threw himself on his straw, and fell asleep, but waked with the grating of the strong bolts which secured the dungeon, and, starting, laid hold of his sword, which lady Douglas had overlooked.

Recommending himself to Heaven, he resolved to sell his life dearly; for he doubted

doubted not but his execution was ordered by his remorseless jailer at that solemn hour.

Standing, in an attitude to strike whoever entered, he saw the massy door turn slowly on its hinges; it was opened by no grim-visaged villain, but the fair form of Agnes Douglas burst on his view. She had beheld lord Henry with looks of pity as her furious mother ordered him to prison, and, spite of its gloom, those looks had irradiated it. The sword of my brother slunk into its scabbard as the beauteous vision approached. Her dress was the plaided garments of her country, apparently wrapped round her in haste; she held them with one hand, whilst the other bore a light; her bright yellow locks hung, in all the artless negligence of nature, in full ringlets down her slender waist; her fair face and neck, which seemed almost to show the blood as it rolled through her azure veins,

were suffused with a rosy blush, as she raised her eyes from the ground, and threw them on the damp walls, then on the gallant youth, who, struck with awe, had dropped on his knee to the lovely form which thus dispelled his slumbers.

"Ah!" said she, with a soft voice, "rise quickly and follow me; ill does such a lodging befit you."

"Whilst you, fair nymph, permit me to gaze on you, it is a gilded palace to Neville," replied my brother.

"Alas, my lord!" said the fair Agnes, "I tremble whilst I say your life is not safe. Purposely were you, I know, decoyed to the borders, though I know not what was the cause; purposely were the retainers of my mother yesterday sent out armed. What do I dare—what would I not dare—to save you! Perhaps even you may say, in so doing, I have forgotten my sex's reserve; will you then despise the hand that gave you liberty?

berty?—yet you will, and Agnes will be doubly wretched!"

They had reached the outer gate, where my brother, on his knees, entreated his preserver to accompany him in his flight; already might her mother be awake, and, missing the key, wreak her fury on the delicate frame of her daughter.

"Ah, no!" she cried, "my lord, fly whilst yet in your power—leave me to my fate—adieu! but, oh! sometimes think of her who will cheerfully endure all, if you are safe!"

"Ah! why," said lord Henry, "my charming Agnes, refuse? It shall be the business of my life to evince my love—to show my gratitude. I will take you to Raby; there presides my sister Cicely, whose gentle soul will welcome you—there shall my lovely maid find a friend worthy of her."

"No, lord Henry, no!" she cried;

 "how

" how can she but hate the child of lady Douglas? No, trust me, no persuasion shall make me yield; I will patiently bear her reproaches, but I will not forsake what I deem my duty."

This was said with a firmness which assured my brother it was needless to persuade her; still kneeling, he imprinted a kiss on the hand which gave him life and liberty, and hastily took the road which led to Wark, where he arrived to the great joy of its inhabitants.

Anxious for the safety of his fair preserver, he remained at Wark to hear her fate, and found the delicate frame of the lovely Agnes was exposed to the damp of the same dungeon she had rescued him from, for the soul of lady Douglas knew no passion but revenge.

Roused to a pitch of almost madness, he left Wark, and begirt the stronghold of lady Douglas, exasperated by whose insults, scarcely could the troops of lord Henry

Henry be restrained from firing the building. At night my brother left the castle to consult his brother and sir Robert Ogle on the steps he had taken, but had not rode far when a bright blaze of light illumed the sky. Fearful what had happened, he returned to view the fortress of lady Douglas in flames. No sooner was it left than the vassals of the earl of Westmoreland, eager for vengeance, had thrown firebrands in at the windows and loopholes.

"Oh, save her! oh, save the fair Agnes!" cried lord Henry, in an agony of despair. "Villains! dearly, dearly shall ye rue the day ye did this deed."

Attempting to enter, he was driven back by the clouds of smoke; screaming with terror he beheld the gentle Agnes; he felt a power more than human; almost singly he forced the postern-gate, flew up the staircase, and taking Agnes in his arms, bore her off in safety. Lady

Douglas was not to be met with, having found means to escape.

It was the advice of sir John Neville, as also sir Robert Ogle, that lord Henry and his lovely prize should return immediately to Raby, as she readily agreed now to do, whilst the earl of Northumberland and sir John Neville, the two wardens, endeavoured to quiet the disturbance this affair might cause on the borders.

"Where is the fair Agnes? Yes, my brother, I will take her to my bosom—I will call her sister—she shall be my friend!" I exclaimed; for, astonished at his recital, I had not till then interrupted him.

"I left her," replied my brother, "at the north side of the park till I had prepared you for receiving her."

"Lead me then," I cried, "to the fair Scot; let me forget she is the daughter of lady Douglas—let me but remember

she

she is the niece of the gallant Home—let me embrace her as the chosen of your heart. Yet, alas, Henry! will lady Douglas ever give her only child to Neville? will the earl of Westmoreland ever agree to defend your choice with his sword? will our brothers lead to the Scottish borders those troops which are destined to seat our cousin Henry on the throne of the haughty Valois? Ah, my brother! what mischief may this cause!—Alas! the revengeful temper of lady Douglas will stop at nothing short of your ruin and that of her daughter—well do you know the king cannot, will not interfere."

My tears fell fast on his hand, which was locked in mine—I was overpowered by contrary emotions.

Ah Matilda! too severely I felt it was the wish of the house of Lancaster to avoid internal commotion—to this wish did I feel I had sacrificed much. Rousing

ing myself—"Come," I cried, "why should we delay?"

I mounted a palfrey which stood at the gate; soon we were with the lovely Agnes, and I clasped her to a heart that felt proud to own her as a sister.

The rose had left her cheeks, which wore the pale hue of the lily from grief and fatigue; her form was light and graceful, and an air of dignity in her mien proclaimed she was noble.

She accompanied us to Raby. The picture of Jane met my sight; she seemed as if smiling on the fair Agnes.

"Hear me," I cried, "thou semblance of her whom Home died to save—hear me solemnly swear to protect his niece, at least endeavour to soften the rigour of her fate."

Throwing her arms round me, the gentle maid wept on my bosom. Raising her head, and looking wistfully at the picture—"This then," said she, "is

lady

lady Jane Neville! what animation, what sensibility, beam over her countenance! Oh! why was I bid to hate? why was I not permitted to join her name with that of Home? Ah! who could behold her, and not have loved as did my gallant uncle? Say, lady Cicely, shall I ever see this charming woman, whose beauty, whose virtues, have caused such contrary effects?"

I informed the fair Agnes of my sister's fate in few words, when, after partaking of some refreshment, she retired for the night.

I returned to my brother in the hall, where I had left him, intending to explain to him what I thought necessary regarding the duke; but I found his spirits and fortitude had fled with Agnes Douglas, and the troubles which apparently seemed to surround him prevented his perceiving the embarrassment I was under. I marked the dejection of

his air, his wan and pallid looks, and resolved I would not disclose to him to-night aught that could further distress him.

When I parted from lord Henry, Jaques attended with an account of the prince; his wound was inflamed to a violent degree; he was now in a high fever, and raved for ever of me in the most incoherent style; "yet though his ravings are," continued Jaques, "in a language which his other attendant understood not, the frequent mention of your name may awaken suspicion."

"Return," said I, "Jaques, then, instantly to your charge; my brother must not see him—nay, he must not know he is here even as Monsieur Bidet; yet how shall I prevent him?"

I retired to my chamber, and dismissing my damsels, without taking off my clothes, threw myself across my bed; a variety of different reflections conspired to distress me.

Rising,

Rising, I walked across the room; all was silent; the inhabitants of the castle seemed to have forgotten their woes.

Why, Cicely, shouldst thou anticipate too soon? Morning will come, and perhaps with it new evils. Again my couch received me. I had just fallen asleep, when a loud blast from a horn made every turret of Raby echo to the shrill sound. I rose; a knocking at the outer gate bade me prepare for some fresh mischief; and as I opened my casement— "Now, Cicely," thought I, "steel thyself for this last fatal stroke of fortune; too sure the duke of Orleans is sought.

"I shall be, good Heavens! at once accused of a sad complication of crimes, each one too horrid to mention. Oh that I might have been spared this!— Yes, wretch that I am! I shall cover with shame the grey hairs of my noble parents!"

"Who stands there, and breaks with horrid

horrid noise the quiet of night?" cried the sentinel.

"I bring," said the stranger, in a Scottish accent, "dispatches of importance to lord Henry Neville; open then to me quick, as you value his favour."

I felt relieved. The drawbridge was let down, and the courier received into the castle, just as the waning crescent was preparing to lend her faint empire to Aurora.

The dispatches required my brother's immediate return to the borders. Lady Douglas, struck with remorse, was laying at the point of death, and wished to assure lord Henry and her daughter of her pardon, and to beg through him forgiveness of the Nevilles, for all the wrongs she had caused.

I suggested to my brother that this might be some artifice of lady Douglas to entrap, but he showed me a letter

from

from sir Robert Ogle which confirmed the account of lady Douglas's illness.

It was impossible that Agnes could bear the fatigue of so hasty a journey; it was therefore agreed she should stay at Raby, and he hoped on his return to espouse her, with the mutual consent of lady Douglas and the Nevilles, with whom the vast possessions she was of right heiress to would plead strongly.

Attended by a single page, lord Henry set out, nor meant to sleep till he reached the castle of Wark, then kept by sir Robert Ogle.

The duke, Jaques informed me, appeared somewhat more composed, and I spent the day in a vain endeavour to comfort the weeping Agnes. Alas! I knew not the comfort which I wished to inspire!

Worn out by watching, I begged, as the prince was better, Jaques would that night try to take some rest.

Retiring

Retiring to my apartment, I began to recall the events of the few preceding days. The remembrance of the blood-stained packet pressed strongly on my mind. I went to my cabinet, but found I had not the key, which had been locked up in an apartment at a very different part of the castle; my women were gone to sleep, and I would not awake them; yet if I went for the key, unless I went through the room where Agnes was in bed, I must pass close by the door of the duke's apartment, or avoid it by going down the grand staircase, along several passages, and ascend another flight which led to the suite of rooms where we had spent the day. The time of night was late—I liked not the lofty staircase and dark passages, and resolved to pass the chamber of the prince, though I felt a strange kind of repugnance at so doing. I went to my closet-window; all seemed

still

still in his apartment; a taper darkly showed which was the window.

Softly then opening my door, with a palpitating heart, I crept cautiously along the gallery. I fancied I heard some sound besides the echo of my own steps —I stopped—I turned to go back—then, ashamed of my folly, again I proceeded with a quicker pace. The bell announced it was midnight—I was half-way to the apartment where I was going; starting at the sound, an additional dread seized me—yet I proceeded; again I imagined I heard some noise—I saw it was not ideal; a casement was open, which flapped to and fro with the wind—"I will shut it," said I, drawing it to me. My taper was extinguished, my courage perfectly exhausted; I was in a part of the castle I seldom visited, and knew not which way to turn; I could not be far from the chamber of the prince, who might perhaps at that hour

hour breathe his last—it was midnight too.

Bewildered by my fear, and imagining I had turned back, I found I was in a large and solitary apartment, nor could I, with all my endeavours, find the door by which I must have entered, and which then undoubtedly was open; overcome by my fears, I resolved to sit down, and wait the return of morning.

I had not been here long till a soft and dying strain of music caught my ear; the notes were wild and melancholy; now they seemed to fall away in melting cadences, then reviving as if near at hand.

"Ah! this is," said I, "the last hour of the rash Orleans, and this sure the signal of his death!"

I fell on my knees, and implored the divine mercy for his soul in the time of its departure. A sudden light gleamed around; lifting my eyes, I saw, Matilda,

tilda, entering by the door I had so long sought in vain, the once-gay, the once-splendid, and powerful duke of Orleans, pale and emaciated; his eyes, fixed on no object, rolled round the room; in one hand he bore a light, in the other a small harp. Throwing himself on the ground, without appearing to be conscious that any one was by, he began, with a frantic hand, to play that tune with which I oft, in the castle of Bidet, had beguiled my sorrows.

I was transfixed with horror at a sight for which I was so ill prepared, and stood, with my hands extended and half-bending, over the miserable Orleans, who, tossing, as if in a rage, the harp from him, drew from his bosom the fatal scarf of Bidet.

I gave an involuntary shriek. Turning his eyes upon me—"Who art thou," he cried, "who thus invadest, who thus stealest on my retirement? What art thou?"

thou?" he exclaimed, after some pause—"The duchess Valentina! What! didst thou say my father sent thee to bid me desist from persecuting the lady Cicely? Know you they told me your husband long outlived his assassination by the accursed Burgundy? But," raising his voice, "I tell you it is false—hush, hush"—then bursting into a loud laugh—"Nay, tell it not again," he continued, in a whisper—"they say he was buried near the mouth of some English river. Have I not, Valentina, wept with you his loss? Did I not witness his interment at Paris? No, no—English ground lays not on my father."—He stopped—he sighed.

I was endeavouring to quit the room, but kneeling he held my garments—"Nay, pardon me, gentle spirit! for such I know thou art—true, I loved to madness—look on this," holding up the scarf—"it was wrought at Bidet—it was given as a pledge of love—mark the flower—

flower—I remember it well," said he, pointing to one which I also remembered well—" I plucked that rose—I gave it to Cicely;" kissing it—" I gave it to her—This, she said, my lord, shall outlive the wintry days—it shall bloom when all its race is gone—draw it, my lord, there—yes, look, just there"—he kissed it with an air of frantic agony—" Ah! how oft has the fair finger of my love passed over this poor inanimate token!"

He rose, but apparently with pain—yet still he held me—" What! did you say she hates me?"—Again he laughed—" No—I say she does not hate me."—I sighed. " Do you pity Orleans then, that you sigh for his woes?—No, do not sigh—I have told her all—every thing—Oh! that accursed woman who led me to destruction!

" Dare you dispute her with me?" he exclaimed, after a silence of some length; " Cicely shall—she must be mine—what

have

have I not dared to obtain her?—dare you as much?—then we are on equal terms."

He let me go, and turning several times round, again broke forth—"Oh! save me—save!—why dost thou glare thus dreadfully on me?—Oh! yes—I remember it well—it was but yesterday I heard——

"If the strange tale was true—yet I say it was not—no, thou wert never the husband of Westmoreland's daughter—thou wert but her page.

"What! did not lady Warwick swear thou wert an impostor?—that thou deludedst the softened Cicely with thy artful tales?"

Again he stopped, and trembled in every joint.

"Nay, look not thus fiercely on me—Yes, wert thou indeed lord Beauchamp—wert thou, as I am told, the husband of the lovely Neville—her free and unbiassed

biassed choice—had I worlds to bestow, or could they restore thy life, freely would the miserable Orleans give them. Rest then in peace, bloody spectre! nor thus range through the castles of Valois, making my heart, once so firm, melt like wax at thy presence—thou at Barcelona wert, like me, inflamed with rage, with jealousy.

"Oh! go, go—drive me not mad—shield me!—oh shield me!—See how the silver armour is red with blood!"

He stopped, and wrapped his face in my garments; petrified with horror, I had sunk on the floor.

"Nay, reproach me not—she is not here—she is not at Bidet. Am I, whom she hates, to be envied?—thou diedst in her arms—ah! would my cruel destiny grant that!—But far from me is her I love."

The moment was arrived, Matilda, when I thought the wish his frantic brain

brain had given birth to would speedily be accomplished; for Orleans was sunk (exhausted by the violence of his ravings) dead, as, I imagined, at my feet, whilst I sat without the power of moving.

The door opened—terrified, I shrieked out.

"Ah!" said Jaques, as he entered, "why did I yield to sleep? Alas! I heard not the prince rise! Speak, lady, is he dead?—how came you here? Oh! this sad, this fatal rencontre!—too sure he is dead—he breathes not!"

"Oh!" I exclaimed, "Jaques, my soul is harrowed up at the recollection! Alas! wild and frantic were the expressions of the prince!—he knew me not, yet wishing to die in my arms, sinking at my feet, he expired; wretched Cicely! would she was also dead!"

"Be comforted, lady; yet I feel the beating of life."

The

The other attendants came in, and assisted in conveying the duke to his chamber.

"Go," said I to one of the domestics, "to the good father Francis; tell him, if ever he wishes to do good, ever to act charitably, to haste immediately to me."

Soon the venerable monk was with me—"Why sent you, my dear child, at this unusual hour, with a hasty-footed messenger, to rouse the hallowed walls of the convent with alarms?"

"Oh! ask me not now, my good father! but if you have from infancy loved and called me daughter—if pity inhabits that bosom, oh! pity your Cicely!—apply that skill in which you so much excel to save the life of——"

I paused.

"Of whom," replied father Francis, "is it you talk?—for whom is it you are thus deeply interested?—whose sufferings thus violently agitate——"

"Oh haste!—ask me no questions—oh fly, my dear father, to the chamber where lays, at the point of death, the rash, the gay duke of Orleans!—oh save him!—sure it was I that killed the generous prince!"

Father Francis looked at me with an astonishment which I then thought not of, but in silence followed me to that chamber whose very door, a few hours ago, I had shuddered at the idea of passing.

The duke was recovered from his fainting, and the good father administered to him a medicine powerful in its effects; then examining his wound, he laid a fresh application to it, which evidently seemed to ease the pain; yet he remained, though free from those wild ravings, insensible to every thing around him, not even knowing Jaques.

I bitterly reproached myself for not having sooner sent for the worthy monk,

on

on whose secresy I could so well depend; besides, already, as my confessor, had I consulted him. I doubt not your recollecting my oft speaking of this learned and pious man, who had been, with the earl my father, early trained to arms; you will also recollect the sad tale of his love—of his wishing then for a conventual life—but that, yielding to his friend's persuasions, a remote apartment was prepared for him at Brancepeth, where he spent his time in deep study and devotional exercises.

I was the favourite of this good man amongst all the children of the earl, and by him was instructed in various branches of learning which are rarely, if ever, taught to girls. My attachment to him was almost equal to what I felt for my father, nor would he quit Raby and Brancepeth, to which places he regularly attended me, till after I had been taught all he could impart, when at length the earl

earl consented to his taking, in the m-vent which he had endowed, the habit of the religious.

Urged by pity, by emotions of which I asked not my heart the cause, I was seated in the chamber of the duke of Orleans; behold me, Matilda, his nurse —behold me anxiously sitting by his couch.

Here then let me pause—let me collect again my scattered senses—let me reflect on this period—it is, as I look back, so strange, I scarce believe it real; reading it, Matilda, oh! will not thy tears oft fall on the page which records the woes of thy

CICELY?

END OF VOL. II.

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